

REVIEW

Of a late Publication, intitled, *A compendious View of the Religious System maintained by the Synod of RELIEF, &c.* By PATRICK HUTCHISON, A. M. Minister of the Gospel in St. Ninians.

CONTAINING

A DEFENCE of the SECESSION against the Charges exhibited by said Author, on the articles of *Intolerant Principles, Promiscuous Hearing, and Unscriptural Terms of Communion.*

AND

A FURTHER DISPLAY of the RELIEF-Scheme, particularly in relation to the SPIRIT and CONSTITUTION, DOCTRINE and COMMUNION of the RELIEF CHURCH.

TOGETHER WITH

A NEW OBSERVATIONS in Vindication of the *Relief Scheme considered.*

BY JAMES RAMSAY,
Minister of the Gospel in GLASGOW.

Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking PERVERSE things to DRAW AWAY DISCIPLES AFTER THEM. ACTS XX. 30.

And by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the SIMPLE. ROM. XVI. 18.

Thus saith the LORD OF HOSTS, they SHALL BUILD, but I WILL THROW DOWN. MAL. I. 4.

GLASGOW:

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Andew Lawson
Secretary

P R E F A C E.

NO sooner did the *Relief Scheme considered* appear in *December* last, than the whole *Relief* interest took the alarm. The author was branded with the most infamous names, and his piece stigmatized for a collection of lies and scurrility. The zeal of the *Clergy* in a particular manner was roused to the most exorbitant pitch. Pronouncing it unworthy of the perusal of Christians, and condemning it to everlasting oblivion, they used all their influence to keep so dangerous a performance out of the hands of their people. Nay, like *Demetrius* and the workmen of like occupation, who set the city of *Ephesus* in an uproar, and meditated nothing but violence and blood against Paul, because his discourses threatened to retrench their superstitious gain, they proceeded so far as to hold solemn consultation about incarcerating a Brother not far from *Glasgow*, who had been active in spreading the publication, till he should produce the author of it.

However more moderate counsels prevailed. Their inclination to exemplify the charitable opinion, that nothing is so effectual to convince an obstinate heretic, or silence a noisy opponent, as to deliver him over to the *secular arm*, was violent; but some *Revd. Father*, we shall suppose, better acquainted with the *British constitution* than the rest, willing to avoid a measure, which must have rung thro' the kingdom, and given the petulant author, and his doughty piece a degree of consequence, which they ill deserve; or sensible, that it would for ever forfeit their pretensions to moderation and zeal for liberty, had so much credit with his *angry Brethren*, as to persuade them to drop, for the present, so hostile a design.

Next accounts assured us the daring invader is immediately to be repelled from the *press*; but whether

in a piece stamped by *Synodical* authority, at least composed and published by *Presbyterial* appointment, or in the laboured production of *six* of the fraternity with *Mr. Hutchison* of *St. Ninians* at their head, was not for some time easy to conjecture, as both reports went current. The gentleman just mentioned, being of some repute for learning, decency and good sense, the *Relief* people, and indeed all who concerned themselves in this controversy, approved of his standing foremost in the cause, as something more satisfying was expected from him than any other in the *Relief* association. For my part, I was happy to be engaged with a person of so much merit, persuaded he would see the request of "giving me *argument* instead of *banter* and *ill-names*" to be a very reasonable one; and therefore that he would enter into the debate, and manage his answer with calmness and candour.

A compendious View, &c. bearing *Mr. Hutchison's* name, was soon after published; but how great was our disappointment to find him actuated by the same spirit, and treading in the same steps, as the author of *A just view*, &c. who acquired so much honour in the *Relief* cause last year. In most instances he altogether shuns the argument; and when he ventures to look it in the face, it seems to be rather with an intention to make a noise, and inflame the passions of his reader against the *Seceders*, than to carry conviction to the mind. He studies either to hide the force of it, that a *big word*, may deliver him from any further trouble, or to carry us off with a long discourse about what he must be convinced makes no part of the business in hand; that being so long entertained with *something*, we may be deceived into an opinion of his sentiments being now fully established; accompanied with such a torrent of personal abuse, discharged on the writer of the *Relief scheme considered*, as no man can be capable of, who has not first worked himself up into the most frantic *rage*. Some have been pleased to alledge he chose this mode of defence to prevent a reply, as I had expressly put in a caveat against it.

Whatever be in that, only *one* thing has prevailed with me to take the least notice of his performance;

—to wipe off the aspersions cast upon the memory of our worthy *Reformers* in the last century, and also upon the principles and conduct of that religious body with which I have the honour to be connected. To many such a vindication is wholly unnecessary; to others it may be useful. In pursuance of this design, the *Relief scheme* is further illustrated, particularly on the article of *communion* as stated by our author, together with a few things in defence of the former publication.

I shall only add, that since concealing my name has been misconstrued, no threatenings of a still severer *drubbing*, nor of the great sums of money, which the *Relief* clergy have in readiness to support a prosecution against me, upon avowing the *Relief scheme* considered, tho' these menaces be both in the highest tone and daily repeated, shall deter me from ingenuously confessing, that the public have had all this trouble from

JAMES RAMSAY.

GLASGOW, }
SEPT. 30. 1779. }



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R E V I E W, &c.

THOUGH the *Relief Scheme considered*, raised the indignation of the *partisans* of that cause, one of them was so obliging as to apprise me of the blow that was meditated, not only against the production itself, but against the *Character* of the detested author. The writer of this piece was unwilling I should know the kind person who laid me under so strong an obligation; yet as it sometimes falls out with the good offices of our friends, which, contrary to their inclination, will discover them by some circumstance attending their kindness, the *stamp* of the *Post Office*, gave me the scent to *Falkirk*. Mr. *Boston*, therefore, the *Relief* minister in that town, who fills his place with so much dignity and applause, is the worthy Brother, to whom I hold myself indebted for this favour, and shall be ready upon all occasions, to make the most ample acknowledgements of his generosity, unless he shall publicly disclaim such a proof of his friendship. It shews so much *sublimity* of *Genius*, such *brilliancy* of *wit*, and so much of the *true* spirit of the *Gospel*, that the impulse to lay it before the public is irresistible. It is as follows:

REV'D. DR. BR.

I HAVE read your Pamphlet with that attention, which it merited, and with that pleasure, which every genuine friend of truth should feel, in the perusal of such a performance. I doubt not, but you have received many congratulatory Letters, from dif-

ferent ministers and private christians of our party, for the valuable service you have done the cause of truth, which is wholly among our hands, and for so justly exposing the vile latitudinarian relievers, and their scheme, which you have clearly demonstrated to be "an odd pernicious device, and the growth of modern scepticism and infidelity." I cannot help joining my Brethren in a Letter of gratitude, on so joyous an occasion. Your excessive and well-known modesty, DR. BR. and my disposition not to flatter, will not permit me to bestow on you, and your pamphlet, half the encomiums, to yourself, which I usually do behind your back. There are only two things, which I think wrong in your valuable performance, not in the matter, but in the order of it. 1. I am of opinion, that the first part of your pamphlet should have been last; because as you have told so many *notorious lies*, in the first part, tho' with a truly pious intention, to support the cause of truth, a great many people, especially the Relievers, do not think it worth their while to read any farther, and take the liberty to call your whole pamphlet a *collection of falsehoods*, and yourself an INFAMOUS, LYING BLACK-GUARD. 2. I am humbly of opinion, that you erred in another respect, viz. in having your falsehoods so interspersed among the few truths in your book. I think you should have connected them together, in their beautiful harmony, and placed them at the end of your book, that there they might have shone forth as one bright constellation, and dazzled every beholder. Had this been done, then *I am certain, that every genuine Seceder, who is as friendly to truth as yourself, would have sworn that they were a cluster of divine truths*, and would have petitioned the Revd. Associate Synod, that the beautiful cluster should be adopted into the *Judicial Testimony*, where they may shine forth to latest ages, as *the infallible guide of the whole Associate interest into the temple of truth*. I was going to advise you to do this in the second edition of your book; but as I have come to understand, that, in a new publication, which will appear in a few weeks, your *lies* are judiciously marked and closely joined together, in their number, order and harmony, all properly illustrated, and all justice



tice done the respectable character of their author, I thought it my duty to inform you of this, as it will save you the trouble of collecting them, into one cluster yourself, and in all probability render a second impression of your book entirely unnecessary. Before I conclude this congratulatory epistle, I cannot but express my desire and hope, that your *multiplied falsehoods*, narrated with such a modest confidence, in your pamphlet, and with such a worthy intention to promote the cause of truth, may meet with that reception from the public which they deserve; and that the public may be so candid and discerning, as to view *your own character* in a proper light, that you may lose nothing of that respect and veneration, to which you are so justly intitled.—As, in your publication, you have neither mentioned the Author, the Printer, nor the place of printing, but only the year of the Christian æra, that ushered this production into the light; so in imitation of your own conduct, so extremely cautious, so becoming the character of an honourable, well-bred gentleman, who wants truth, and not names to appear, I have not told you the Author of this Letter, the place nor time of writing it, but the year. I remain,

REV'D. DR. BR.

1779.

Yours respectfully,

PSEUDOPHILOS*.

Soon after receiving this missive, *A compendious View*, &c. was put into my hand, confirming the intelligence of my valuable friend in all its extent. In this performance I am indeed cudgelled to great satisfaction †.

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* The same gentleman is supposed, from a variety of circumstances, to be the author of a *very valuable* sermon upon *LICE*, lately published. Whoever admires the noble efforts of human genius, and has a just relish of the *genuine Attic salt*, will find the richest entertainment in that celebrated piece.—They are sold, at *Glasgow*, in threepenny parcels, by the *Rev'd. Mr. G. Grocer*.

† It declares me "an anonymous scribler," who uses "great swelling words of *vanity* and *falsehood*," and "more resembles

The world will judge, on reading the *Relief scheme considered*, how far I have merited such abuse. It is much to the honour of the *Relief* interest, that many of its most zealous adherents, profess themselves perfectly

resembles the *accuser* of the Brethren than a *Minister* of the new testament." Part 1. p. 25. I "seem to be a *poor Critic*," am admonished for "not having made myself more a master of the *original language*;" Since my "commentary upon texts is a huddle of *confusion and nonsense*;" in consequence whereof he "pities the people who are under the ministry of such an *ignorant Perverter of scripture*." Part 3. p. 67. 68. The Reader is supposed to have a "sufficient specimen of my *ignorance and errors*;" inasmuch that the author "is loth to tire his patience with more of this *inconsistent nonsense*." Part 3. p. 72. 73. But in the *Appendix* all regard to decency is, of purpote, cast off. There the *Relief scheme considered*, is stigmatized as a "*scurrilous invective*," and the writer of it "a *deceitful, blood thirsty assassin,—a lying defamatory scribler,—a deceitful sophist*;" whose performance is characterised by mazes of *error, confusion, contradiction, and nonsense*." P. 2. One would think this pretty liberal chastisement; but it is little more than *brandishing the rod*; for in the next page the attention of the reader is summoned, "till he is held forth to the inspection of the public, as the object of *just derision and contempt*,—chastised as an *illiberal petulant defamer*." After this *studied humility and meekness*, he falls on in observing, "the *abusive scurrility*" which proceeds "from the envenomed tongue of this *waspyish petulant defamer*," that "with cruelty and impiety hath torn up the ashes of the dead;—an *invidious upstart*; who, tho' a celebrated *pulpiteer*, has a *continued monotony*, roaring with the voice like a bull, and *tossing the head like a mouutebank*." P. 3. Tho' "a staunch professed *witness for truth*, he bears a resemblance of that spirit who is called *the father of lies*; and the grand distinguishing feature of the PARENT characterises the SON." No marvel, therefore, that "he palms upon the world a *gross falsehood*, asserts a *notorious falsehood* and tells a *glaring lie*." P. 4. He is an "*officious intrusive intermeddler, a busy body*, engaged in a practice, which *chimney sweeps* would esteem below *their character*;—gives demonstrable evidence of his being *destitute* of the Christian temper;—bred on a *dunghill*, is engaged in *low, dirty, and unmanly exercises*; in these he is as much in his element, as the serpent *licking dust*, and the sow when *wallowing in the mire*;"—An "*illiberal bigot*, that has the impudence to assert *downright falsehoods* to accomplish his diabolical purpose, the *greedy blood-sucker*," whose "*cloven foot*, a fourth time, appears in asserting a most *notorious lie*." P. 5. On a clap, comes another "*bare faced falsehood*." The next moment

fectly ashamed of their advocate, and his manner of agenting their cause. Some parts of *Mr. Hutchison's* character have been represented to me in such a light as to make it highly probable, when he has leisure to review

ment he is even convicted of "a notorious lie" and yet again presumes to assert a "no less notorious lie." Is not this a "lying prophet? What shall be done to thee, O FALSE TONGUE!" and then this "lying, defamatory scribler is put to defiance," P. 6. Nay he has formed a "system of lies; and the similarity of his character to that of the accuser of the brethren, who was a liar from the beginning, shews, that they are ONE IN HEART, COUNSEL AND OPERATION." And if so, why should our author scruple to call him "a downright liar, in the name of all the Relief people?" P. 7. All this don't satisfy, for he is still proclaimed "a notorious liar; a defamatory, viperous bigot." Again "he tells a detestable lie; impudently asserting so many falsehoods," as amount to "a noted proof of his integrity, and the sincerity and truth of his profession. He will not content himself with RESEMBLING SATAN, in the black art of falsehood and defamation, but he must invade the prerogative of that great Being, who alone searches the heart." After this it is very kind in *Mr. H.* to "wish him a little more of that charity, which suffereth long and is kind, and doth not behave itself unseemly, P. 8. for, he has given such a "specimen of his Christian Moderation, and regard to truth" that our Author "would be extremely sorry the lives of the Relief ministers were in his hand; lest he might accomplish literally on them, what the mild Emperor Caligula, (a man of similar complexion with himself) wished to do to Rome." P. 9. Ah! "this Reverend LIAR, whom *Mr. Bell* will endeavour to expose to public shame as a lying Prophet." P. 11. In summing up the whole, it is found that *Mr. H.* "has convicted this illiberal, defamatory bigot, of as many glaring falsehoods as there were years in the siege of Troy; and were all his other lies selected, it is questionable, if any publication, since that distant period, contained a greater number of abominable lies and falsehoods." The party with whom this author is connected, "are solemnly admonished to bring him under scriptural discipline, after he has been convicted of ten notorious lies.---If they do not, they will be latitudinarians with a witness, and afterwards may hold communion, Ministerial and Christian, with the beastly drunkard, the profane swearer, and the vile adulterer." &c. But under an apprehension they may be deaf to so salutary a counsel, the author boasts him again with a "for shame! a minister of the God of truth to be guilty of so many glaring violations of truth, in a publication to the world, a scene of such open deliberate falsehood, methods so diabolical and infernal." P. 11. Lest all this

review his performance, and begins to think *coolly*, that he will condemn himself much more than any other can. Who is not ready to *fret* when his *fore heel* is touched? Neither is it easy to keep temper in a *desperate* cause. The heat of controversy is apt to transport the best of men beyond the bounds of *religion, reason* and *decency*. My sympathy with him is the greater, since I was acquainted with his "infirm state of health;" which appears to be such in its nature and effects, as might well have excused his lack of service.

As to me; I hope to be delivered from the *spirit* and *style* of the *Relief* writers; sensible that it is a dishonour to Christianity, and injurious to any cause. The reader shall not therefore be disturbed with any passionate outrage, in return to the *scurrility* and *abuse* which has been poured so liberally upon me. An INFINITELY GREATER than I, was reviled as a *deceiver* of the people,—a *Samaritan*, and one that *had a devil*; nay in league with *Beelzebub*, the prince of devils: and his adversaries supposed they said well, when all those *blasphemous* accusations were laid against him. "But when reviled, he reviled not again; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." *This* is the glorious pattern we are called to study and follow. After *this* manner I desire to learn Christ. Conscious of having advanced nothing as *fact*, which I was not persuaded upon good grounds was *true*, nor any point of *doctrine*, but what appears to me *scriptural*, I can assure *Mr. Hutchison*, that none of his charges and denunciations have come near my conscience; neither has his torrent of abuse affected for a moment my feelings. They have swelled my *pity*, never my indignation and resentment. Any remarks upon his performance, which are thought ne-

this should not work, "This *poor unhappy man*" is begged to "turn his attention to the *righteous judgment of God*," and very kindly doomed to the pit of eternal perdition "if infinite mercy and repentance prevent not." The public in the mean time are "guarded against the writings of a man, that are evidently stuffed with *lies* and *falsehood*, *virulence* and *defamation*." P. 12.

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cessary, shall be offered, therefore, with all the respect that is consistent with honesty and plainness.

The author of *A compendious View, &c.* intending to silence the loud complaints of the public about the doctrines and form of the *Relief* church being kept in the dark, is so obliging as to give us, what he sometimes calls "a specimen of her doctrines," and at other times, "a compendious view of the religious system maintained and taught by the synod of *Relief*," consisting of 22 pages. I shall say nothing about the propriety of dwelling upon the existence of God,—the nature and order of the creation, and particularly of the creation of man, in so very short an *abstract*; P. 4, 5; Nor of his taking up so much of the reader's time and attention in listening to his reasonings concerning the equity of the divine constitution, in appointing *Adam* the foederal head of his posterity, P. 5, 6; concerning the extent of Christ's representation in the covenant of Grace, P. 8, 9. or the pardon of sin in justification, P. 20. and the like; tho' some have thought this very *ridiculous*; and others have wished the place occupied by his argumentation had been assigned to some other material articles of the *Relief Creed*. All intended on this part of the pamphlet is, to point out some things that are not easily comprehended, which it may be necessary therefore to explain a little more particularly; and then offer a reason or two why, after all our author's labour, we are as much at a loss about the *Relief* system as ever. The matters reckoned hard to be understood are such as these—

That "the tree of life, which grew in the midst of the garden, was a *material* and *visible representation* of that glorious and happy life which was promised in the covenant of works." P. 7. That this tree was a seal of the covenant, designed to confirm Adam's faith of that happy life, fit to awaken and fix his meditations upon it, is plain; but how it could be a *material visible representation* of the favour and image of God which he then enjoyed; or of the inutterable glories of the heavenly state, is not so clear. Will these things bear a *material visible representation*? What material object could possibly present them to his bodily

dily eyes? or how does it appear, that the tree in question was intended to serve these purposes?

Another thing equally uncommon is, "that Christ assumed human nature into union with his divine personality." P. 9, 10. That our gracious Redeemer assumed man's nature into union with his divine *person* as the Son of God, is true, and has been the doctrine of the church from the beginning. But is the *person* of Christ and his *personality* the same? or don't they convey as different ideas, as that of a man and his humanity? When did this manner of expression creep into use? Is it meant to teach an *absurdity*, or does it mean *nothing*? and shall we employ unmeaning terms on so high a mystery, for the sake of saying something new and striking.

Perhaps it may be of small consequence, when he asserts that Christ's kingdom "commands every thing that hath being." There can be no heresy in this. His kingdom undoubtedly ruleth over all things; and every thing must have *being*; but when he speaks of "the law and gospel-church" in the same page, P. 14; the matter is more interesting. Perhaps, he may be right in this too; only we may enquire what is meant by the *law-church* in distinction from the *gospel-church*? Is not the GOSPEL *essential* to the church? Can there be any church founded upon and administered by the law? Was not the church under the old dispensation as much a *gospel-church* as under the new one,—a church standing on the *new covenant*,—enjoying the tidings, and also the blessings of salvation through Christ? What is our author's opinion on this head?

The account of church officers is a little *mysterious*. P. 15. "They are pastors and teachers, together with helps and governments, or presbyters, who are to aid the pastors of the church in ruling—To these we add Deacons." Do you so? but why? when was it agreed that both *helps* and *governments* mentioned by the apostle 1 Cor. xii. 28. were *Presbyters*? Our divines use to explain these as distinct officers, one of which can have no share in church-rule; nor are either of them in ecclesiastical and ordinary phrase, counted *Presbyters*. To *helps* and *governments* you add

add deacons. But *Presbyterian* writers and churches think that this is just adding *Deacons to Deacons*; because they take *helps and Deacons* to be the same, as *distinct* from *Pastors* and *Ruling Elders*. Nor does it appear they are mistaken in this; for it is plain in the passage under consideration, the apostle enumerates *all* church officers, *ordinary* and *extraordinary*. These and none other our Lord hath authorized. If therefore to *helps* and *governments* you will add *Deacons*, we are afraid the question may be proposed, Who hath required this at your hands?

What is understood by observing, P. 17. that "few in comparison improve their right to believe into real faith." It is a great matter to be fully convinced of our warrant to believe in Christ. Many have it, who never think of it; and many think of it, who do not see it in any proper light, and thence make no proper use of it. But by what means, natural or supernatural, can a man improve his *warrant*, or as our author calls it, his *right* to believe into *real faith*? Can the *warrant*, or that which gives a man a *right* to believe be turned into *faith itself*? Or is not the very improvement of the *warrant* or *right* to believe, just *faith*?

When stating the difference between *justification* and *regeneration*, P. 18. he tells us that "the one respects the *penalty* of the law and the *punishment*, which it threatens; the other respects the *precepts* of the law, and the *obedience*, which it requires." Pray what is the difference between the *penalty* of the law, and the *punishment* which the broken law threatens? How can justification respect the *penalty* of the law, without respecting also its *precepts*, the violation whereof incurs the penalty? While in justification we obtain *pardon*, are we not also *accepted* as righteous? How is this possible, if justification respect not, and that *immediately, directly* and *essentially*, the *precepts* of the law, which are the rule and measure of righteousness?

Pursuing his discourse upon the same great doctrine of *Justification*, in some things he is not so dark; for he very *gravely* assures us, that when the "righteousness of Christ is imputed to a sinner, it is not infused into his nature;" a point which no *Protestant* will question; and which no man who understands the

terms can have any difficulty about. What is *imputed*, in the nature of things, cannot be *infused*. What becomes a man's property in *law reckoning*, cannot by that imputation be *put within him*. He also observes very *judiciously*, that "in justification a believer not only obtains a title to life, which he cannot lose; but also a full, free and irreverfible pardon of all his fins." This is perfectly plain. If a man have an indefeafible title to *life*, he must have a pretty fingular turn of thought who can imagine, that fuch a person's iniquity is not forgiven. The one is neceffarily implied *in*, and, in the order of nature, cannot but go *before* the other. But what follows needs fome *little* explication to make it comprehenfible, that "a believer's obedience is at once the *evidence* of his title to life, and his *meetnefs* for the poffeffion of eternal life in refpect of the *frame* and *temper* of his *mind*." P. 19. That the fanchtification of our nature by the fpirit is our *meetnefs* for heaven, to which we obtain a title in justification, and that *obedience* is an *evidence* to ourfelves and others, both of our perfons being juftified, and our natures being renewed, we have been taught, and firmly believe. But how *obedience* fpringing from faith, and a *fruit* of a believer's *meetnefs* for heaven, in refpect of the *frame* and *temper* of his *mind*, fhould be that *meetnefs* itfelf is ftrange. A gracious *frame* and *temper* of foul will fhew itfelf in acts of gofpel obedience; but are thefe *acts of obedience* the fame with the renewed *frame* and *temper* from which they proceed? Is a fubject's *obedience* to the laws of his prince his *meetnefs*, in refpect of the *frame* and *temper* of his *mind*, for being admitted into the palace, and to ftand continually in the royal prefence?

We fhall only notice another expreffion, which fo far as has occurred in my fmall reading, muft be *very new*.—That "darknefs, enmity and diforder ftill remain in all the powers of the mind till the body of clay be diffolved." P. 22. The difficulty is not, how the underftanding, will, and affections, which our author exprefly names, are made powers of the *mind*, though that muft be fome *new* ftroke of fciences; but how corruption remains in all thefe till the *body of clay* be diffolved. For it has hitherto been thought, that
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in death believers are made *perfect* in holiness ; all remaining impurity being then purged for ever, from every power of the soul. But usually, it is not till a considerable time after death that the *body of clay is dissolved*. May we be permitted to enquire, in what state he supposes the powers of the *mind* to be, during that intermediate space ? Is his *purgatory* the same, which the *good Papists* have invented ? Or has he luckily hit on a more *gentle* one, where the souls of the saints must necessarily take a short, tho' a very profitable turn ?

But admitting all these points to be quite clear and satisfactory ; our author certainly cannot be so vain as to suppose, the public will sustain his "*Treatise*," as he is pleased to call it, for a proper exhibition of the religious system maintained by the *Synod of Relief*. For,

FIRST ; This *Treatise*, however *elaborate*, comprehends but a *few* articles. Several capital and important doctrines, it must be acknowledged, are here set before us, and such no doubt as the writer thought would stand particularly recommended to serious people ; but it is a pity, since engaged in this business, that he has taken so *narrow* a compass. How many precious articles of the *Christian faith* are wholly omitted ? no less precious than those our author has done so much justice to. The *worship* of the church, too, he says nothing about ; save in general, that Christ has appointed two seals of the covenant, *Baptism* and the *Lord's Supper*. Her *government* is left untouched, farther than a *sort* of enumeration of her officers, accompanied with a very necessary observation, that their power is in subordination to her great Head. Not a syllable about its *form* or *tenor* of *administration*. Nor have we the most distant hint, whether *discipline* be so much as competent to her. From all which, *one* of these things, in spite of our utmost charity, *will* follow ; ---either that the *Relief system* is the most *imperfect* and *curious* system in *Christendom* ; or, that our author has failed unaccountably in *his* exhibition of that *system*, notwithstanding his laborious pains for our information ; a simple reference to the *Westminster Confession*, after the manner of his par-

ty, would have directed us to an incomparably better view of their principles.

SECONDY; It does not appear, nor has our author the hardiness any where to insinuate, that the *Relief Synod* either *appointed* him to give us a compendious view of their religious system, or that when he submitted to the drudgery of drawing up their *creed*, from an impulse of generous zeal, it obtained *their approbation*, or the sanction of *their authority*. The public made no demands for *Mr. Hutchison's* private confession of faith. We wanted a declaration of what the *Relief church, as such*, holds; and expected it from her *representatives* met in judgment. Do the *Synod of Relief* avow this *creed*? Where shall we find their *Synodical* deed to that effect? If they did not compile this confession, nor ever acknowledged it to be *theirs*; upon what rational grounds can this writer conclude, the world will give him credit that it is indeed the *Relief* system? Were I to compose a *creed* to my liking, and call it the confession of the *Associate Synod*, while they never employed me in that work, never offered to adopt it as their own, perhaps never saw nor heard of it, till it appeared in print; whether would their charge of *temerity* and *presumption*, or the complaint of the public of *imposition* and *insult* be most just?--- The cases seem to be parallel; unless the *Relief Synod*, as *Mr. Boston* elegantly expresses it, have constituted him the *Lord-keeper* of their faith. 'Till something farther be done, therefore, the world must be persuaded the *Relief church* lies in the same obscurity as before. And when they shall see meet to usher her into the light, perhaps from the above reflections it may appear. *our author* is not perfectly qualified for such important service, except his pen be under the direction of a more accurate and skilful hand.

The SECOND Part of his piece, consisting of eight pages, contains an account of the *precise* points, in which the *Synod of Relief* differ from the *established church*. These *precise* points, it seems, are only two; legal and unsound preaching, together with violent *intrusions* into the ministry. Upon which, at present, I shall only express my sorrow that the points in-difference

ference with our *Mother* are so few, when the Lord is evidently calling for a far more *extensive* pleading; and proceed to the

THIRD *Part* of his treatise, which is said to contain the things in which the *Synod* differ from the *Secession* in *Scotland*. Here, after setting aside several things, which he says make no part of the *peculiar scheme* of SECEDERS, he finds the points in difference to be, 1. Their *anti-toleration principles*. 2. The article of *occasional bearing*. 3. The unscriptural narrowness of their terms of communion. I have no objection to these several heads marking our further progress in this *review*.

On the FIRST of these heads, our author is at great pains in dressing a man of *straw*; and when he has got him properly attired, and set in the most striking attitude, he falls a *threshing* the poor wretch most unmercifully thro' twenty pages. He will have it, "that the reformation which SECEDERS contend for, is an *uniformity* in one system of doctrines, one mode of worship, and one form of church-government, TO BE ENFORCED BY THE SWORD OF THE CIVIL MAGISTRATE on all ranks of persons in *Scotland*,--*England* and *Ireland*, without *toleration* to any who cannot agree in the same system---It is not an *unanimity* in religious sentiments, to be effected among the *British* subjects, by reasonable *persuasion* and *conviction* of the truth; but a *forced* profession of a certain system of doctrines BY THE PAINS OF THE STATE." P. 6. In regard this calumny is as *abominable*, as it is *bold*, this writer might be suffered to please himself in his *inglorious* triumph. But for the sake of others, we shall beg leave to obstruct his progress.

TOLERATION in the *state* is usually, and may justly be distinguished into *negative* and *positive*. By *positive toleration* is meant, the *Magistrate's* giving *positive* and *direct countenance* to a system of *error*, and to *erroneous persons*, in the profession and maintenance of it; when he takes the *former* under the positive protection of law, and encourages the *latter* to disseminate their unscriptural tenets, and abide in their idolatrous

latrous or superstitious practices, by honouring them with places of *power* and *trust*, building and *endowing* churches for their religious assemblies, and the like. *Toleration* of this kind, *Seceders* are not ashamed to pronounce unlawful. They are of opinion, that there is an *essential* difference between *truth* and *error*, as there is between what is morally right and wrong : and therefore, that *error* can have no just claim to the patronage or defence of any, more than to its being received and professed. On the contrary ; as it is sin in a *private* person to espouse, profess and encourage an erroneous system, with whatever plausibility it may be digested and recommended ; it must be a crime much more atrocious in the *magistrate*, who is the *minister* and *deputy* of God to shew it favour ; especially when he has been enlightened in the knowledge of the truth, and is fully persuaded of the falsity of the opposite system. We cannot understand how *God's vicegerent upon earth* can lawfully approve of, and favour what his *Sovereign Lord* condemns, and abhors ; but think the divine command “ be not partakers of other mens sins : keep thyself pure,” 1 Tim. v. 22. of as undoubted and forcible obligation on *magistrates* in their place, as on *ministers* in their place ; and that if it be the duty of the Kings of the earth to withdraw their power from the *antichristian beast*, it must be their duty to *deny*, or having granted it, to withdraw their power from the kingdom of *darkness* and *error* under *every* new shape it may assume. If this be a mistake, we confess it to be one of some consequence, and will take it kind to be set right.

Negative toleration is, the *Magistrate's* forbearing to molest the erroneous in the profession and exercise of their religion, when their principles are not subversive of good order in society, and their deportment regular and inoffensive — Such a toleration, *Seceders* approve of, and contend for. From their hearts they detest persecution for conscience sake, under whatever name or pretence it can be practised. They are clear, that neither *Magistrate* nor *Clergy* ought to dictate to their fellow men in matters of religion ; and that, with the limitation now mentioned, men are amenable to God only for their religious princi-

principles, and the use made of their *Bibles*. Convinced, that the kingdom of Christ is, in its *whole constitution and frame*, distinct from the kingdoms of this world, and therefore is not to be propagated by *car-nal* weapons of any kind, they can say as strong things against *intolerance*, as our author is capable of; and have the vanity to think, they could manage the argument in defence of their principles about it, with more convincing evidence than he has done, after all his airs of self-importance.

The world, I doubt not, will give more credit to their *joint, unanimous, judicial* declarations, than to this writer's most solemn asseverations. One Synod of the *Association* assures us, they "detest the principle of persecution for conscience sake, or of denying the enjoyment of natural rights to such, whose principles or practices are not inconsistent with the peace and order of civil society*." The other Synod indeed have nothing expressly upon that subject in their warning against *Popery*, but sufficiently discover the same amiable spirit of moderation and forbearance†.

Does not our author grant, that "both parties of *Seceders* seem now to be of opinion, that all peaceable members of the civil state ought to be allowed the free exercise of their religion." P. 20. How then can he have the confidence to represent them as men of *intolerant* principles, in the most odious light imaginable? How shall he answer for it to God or the public, for stating that to be their principle which he himself must know to be a *vile calumny*, and which he is obliged publicly to acknowledge such?—They were once of *another* opinion.—Though they had *once* entertained different sentiments, an honest mind would rejoice at their being better enlightened, rather than turn it into a scandal and reproach. It yields them the merit of being open to conviction, eagerly grasping at truth when they perceive it, and in readiness to embrace the first opportunity of avowing it openly.

* See *A Testimony by the Associate Synod against the legal encouragement lately given to POPERY*. P. 6.

† See a *Warning by the Burgher Synod*.

But what proof has our author that these were not the *original* views of seceders ? Oh ! “ in their *Judicial Testimony* they condemn *all* the tolerations that ever took place in Britain since the reformation.” P. 5. No, Sir ; not in their *testimony* ; nor in any other paper emitted by them. You either condemn a testimony, which you never read with attention, or must have small acquaintance with the history of the church in *Britain*. But tho’ this allegation were true, as it is not, it will not establish his insinuation, that, from the beginning, their principles were intolerant ; because it were easy to shew, that *all* the tolerations that have obtained in *Britain* were unscriptural in their *principle, nature and end* ; especially in the infamous reigns of Charles II. and James. VII. ; -- *tolerations* flowing from an usurped, blasphemous, spiritual *supremacy*, pretended *prerogative* and absolute power, for the introduction of *Popery and slavery*. To this the *acts of toleration* themselves, and the histories of these times bear undeniable witness. Is it not admirable reasoning, that because *Seceders* condemn *all* the tolerations *hitherto* granted in *Britain*, they must be, or at least have been, adversaries to *all* toleration ?

As to the toleration “ granted by queen Ann 1712, allowing her subjects (papists excepted) the free exercise of their religion according to their consciences,” P. 5. we grant that *Seceders* condemned it in their *testimony* ; they do so still ; and yet are perfectly consistent with themselves ; because this was much more than a *simple forbearing* to vex the erroneous and superstitious for conscience sake. It was *direct, positive encouragement* to men of the worst principles, *religious and political* ; men who, for many years, had been labouring by methods the most diabolical, for the overthrow of all our civil and religious liberties. The *Associate Presbytery* express themselves with much precision about it. “ Toleration of THIS KIND, are contrary “ to the word of God, and to the principles of this “ Church contained in the confession (Chap. 22. § 3. “ Ch. 23. § 3.) and the answer to the question in the “ larger Catechism, *What are the sins forbidden in the “ second commandment ?* And the present was mainly “ intended and designed for strengthening and sup-
“ porting

“porting a malignant and disaffected party in Scotland
 “who ever since the revolution have openly espoused
 “the cause and interest of a *Papish Pretender*; and
 “whose meetings to this day are not only nurseries of
 “superstition, but seminaries of disaffection to our
 “sovereign King *George* and the Protestant succession
 “in his illustrious family.” *Act and Testimony*, P. 95.
 Was not this a sufficient reason for condemning it,
 though I were not to add, that it was contrary to the
 most solemn national engagements to purge out *Epis-*
copacy with other evils; and also to the late *union* let-
 tlement? Has our author so little of the spirit of a
Briton, is he so much a friend to the *Chevalier* of *St.*
Germain, and so great an enemy to the illustrious
 house of *Hanover* as to approve of, and zealously
 plead for such a toleration?

This is not all. Our good friend thrusts in the *Se-*
ceders between the horns of the *Solemn League*, and the
act of the commissioners of the convention of estates en-
 joining it Oct. 12th 1643; and there he will oblige
 them to take with their persecuting principles. “They
 own the obligation of that *solemn league and covenant*,
 and must, on that account, allow they contend for
 an *uniformity enforced by the sword*.” P. 6, 7, 8. Yes;
 they own the obligation of it, and are persuaded the
 violation of this covenant, is one of our most heinous
 national sins; yet execrate all such *bloody principles*,
 as he would force upon them.

It has been the manner of every generation to sup-
 pose themselves much wiser than their Fathers; thence
 we have been taught by many to look on our *ancestors*
 in the last century, who composed this covenant,
 and joined in swearing it, in no other light, than a set
 of *Enthusiasts* and *Madmen*, that neither understood
 the gospel, nor had imbibed any thing of its spirit.
 But who that is not totally ignorant of their princi-
 ples, temper and conduct, can be the dupes of such
 credulity? The *annals of Britain* cannot shew a list
 of so illustrious names as adorned this period. For a
 spirit of manly liberty, political sagacity, solid learn-
 ing, and pure religion, our *covenanting Fathers* were
 the brightest ornaments of their country. It must,
 therefore, betray the most unpardonable vanity and

deepest ingratitude, for the *weaklings* of these times, in a great measure strangers to their circumstances, to throw out *illiberal and rash* censures upon their conduct. This observation is not intended either to vindicate or excuse their mistakes; but to impress the reader with the propriety of studying the history of that age, and the characters of the principal persons who flourished in it, before he listen to every gossip who takes the liberty to reflect on *their* memory, to whom, under Providence, we owe every thing valuable.

One part of the *Solemn League* had matters of *state* for its object, suited to their peculiar and perilous circumstances. To this part belongs the third article, and also the paragraph quoted with so much indignation by our author "about the discovery of all such as have been, or shall be incendiaries, malignants or evil instruments, by hindering the work of reformation of religion, dividing the king from the people, or dividing one of the kingdoms from another, or making any faction or parties contrary to this league and covenant." Besides an engagement to abide by, and defend the reformed religion, it was an oath of *allegiance* to the *Sovereign*, and a bond of *political* union between the three nations, for strengthening mutual confidence, with the defence and preservation of their unalienable civil rights, which had been daringly invaded and wrested from them. Now where is the harm of annexing *civil penalties* to the perpetration of *civil crimes*, such as these specified in that oath? Where is the injustice, or even the smallest impropriety of punishing those in an exemplary manner, who not only refuse to accede to a political alliance, and swear an oath of allegiance, which the very *existence* of the state makes necessary; but exert all their influence to sap the foundations of government, and ruin the best interests of their country? What nation under heaven has not done this? What man endowed with common sense, can find fault with it?

If it be said, the framers of this covenant committed an egregious mistake in blending civil and religious things in the same oath. Perhaps they did: And, I sincerely wish, had their circumstances and the one
great

great object in view permitted it, that these matters had been preserved distinct, in two distinct oaths; because I am conscious an oversight in this, if it be one, has been the *occasion* of tearing the memory of our *Reformers*, and fixing the blackest imputations upon their cause. Yet this was not so easy as some superficial thinkers apprehend. The churches of *England* and *Ireland* were groaning under an enormous load of tyranny and superstition; the whole political system of *British* liberty was shaking to its center. The object of those worthy men was *complex*, as it was great and perilous;—the *preservation* of the *state*, and the *reformation* and *defence* of the *church*. The interests of truth were blended to their hand, and as such presented themselves to their minds. Thus it was natural, if not absolutely necessary, to comprehend them in one instrument of assurance and defence,

One thing is certain, being unanimously vouched by the historians of these times, that none were enemies to this covenant, or professed scruples in taking it, but those, who being of *Popish* or *Prelatical principles*, were the slaves of *prerogative* and *arbitrary power*; in use to employ every effort for overturning the constitution of the state, and for reconciling the church to the *See of Rome*; or, at least, for retaining and fostering the ancient superstitions. The worthy persons before us were perfectly satisfied of this. Was it not necessary then, even upon the principle of *self-defence*, to detect these malignant, prerogative *minions*; and if they would lay themselves open to the *just* resentment of their country, that they should have cause to repent their bloody, traiterous designs.

Moreover, it is not in the power of the greatest enemies to this covenant, and the framers of it, to shew, that it was enforced upon *any* in the high terms of the act of the Commissioners of the convention, or that the least severity was exercised upon recusants on account of their *religious* scruples. The case stood here, as when the *National Covenant*, of which afterwards, was enjoined. So far were the friends of the *Solemn League* in *Scotland* from enforcing it in the terms of this act, or in any less rigorous, which the state of the nation might seem to require, that we find special care

taken by them to be satisfied about the sincerity of those who offered to take the covenant, after having discovered their aversion and malignity. In an act of the General Assembly, 1649 Ses. 19. it is appointed and ordained, that "none of these persons who are debarred from the covenant and communion, shall be admitted and received thereto, but such as after exact trial, shall be found for some competent time before or after the offer of their repentance, to have, in their ordinary conversation given real testimony of their dislike of the late unlawful engagements and of the courses and way of malignants, and of their sorrow for their accession to the same, and to live soberly, righteously and godly." A little after, speaking of some who had made defection, it is ordained, "that those notwithstanding their profession of repentance, be not suddenly received, but a competent time, according to the discretion of the Judicatory, be assigned to them for trial of the evidence of their repentance." Instead of violently obtruding the covenant upon all, what greater caution could have been used to prevent the admission of the unworthy? These things are only offered to wipe off the aspersions cast upon our *Reformers*. For—

After all, the *Seceders* can see no necessary connexion between approving of the *Solemn League*, and acknowledging its obligation in things undeniably binding from the *moral law* of God, and approving of the *act of the Commissioners*, enjoining it by severe penalties. They consider these things as widely different; and are of opinion, that their approbation of the one no more infers their approbation of the other, than their receiving the *Christian religion*, as delineated in the scriptures, implies, directly or indirectly, their satisfaction with all the measures, which have been taken in many kingdoms to *establish and propagate* it. And had the penalties in this act been intended for punishing, and actually inflicted upon those who scrupled the *covenant*, simply on the score of the *religious principles* engaged to in it; whatever veneration they have for the memory of their worthy *Ancestors*, the *Seceders* would with all their heart, reprobate such methods of

of advancing their cause, as *cruel* and truly *antichristian*. They wish to see their creed *crammed* down no man's throat; nor would any thing ever extort from them an approbation of such methods of conversion, by whatever names they have been sanctified. Nay, lest their *Amen* to every thing, done by our fathers in that memorable period, should be taken for granted; they expressly declare, "that since the church militant is in an imperfect state, it is not intended to affirm, that under the above mentioned period, (between 1638 and 1650) there was *nothing defective* or wanting, as to the beauty and order of the house of God; or that there was *nothing culpable* in the *administration*." Act and Testimony, P. 62. So that tho' it could be shewn, the reformation interests were carried forward and supported, with all the iniquitous proceedings of a *Spanish inquisition*, it would not in the least affect them, or the cause in which they are engaged. They would take no farther interest in these things, than to *bewail*, and *testify* as they have opportunity, against them. When all this is considered, I hope the world will treat so *bold* and *groundless* a calumny, as this writer attempts to fix on *Seceders*, with all the contempt and indignation it deserves.

The SECOND thing our author thinks fit to descant upon, is, what he calls *occasional hearing*. He tells us, "the *Seceders* maintain it to be unlawful for those of their way to hear any minister whatever, upon any occasion whatever, but those of their own party; especially they hold it unlawful to hear the ministers of *Relief*." P. 23. He affirms "the *Antiburghers* rebuke their hearers who offend in this article," tho' he allows them the merit of being *consistent* in this; P. 21. and is pleased to ascribe the aversion, which *Seceders* in general have to this practice, to a "fearful apprehension that some of the *Secession* sheep, by wandering into *Relief* pastures, may find the food so *sweet* and *nourishing*, as to endanger their returning to the fold and pasture of the *Association*;" in all which "he perceives a considerable degree of the serpent's *cunning*;" P. 23; and then raises a wonderful *true and* (c) upon them.

There

There is one circumstance, which gives my good friend much the advantage on this head, that as he appeals to the *passions* and *prejudices* of the multitude, so these are strongly engaged on his side. With many, *these* need only to be roused sufficiently, and his point is gained; whereas he that would agent the cause of the *Secession*, pushing against wind and tide, can scarce hope for an attentive, dispassionate *hearing*. However, since a call is given me in providence, this shall not hinder from laying before the candid my sentiments on the subject.

Only it may be proper at the entry to observe, that the *Seceders* are far from thinking, as their enemies are wont to *traduce* them, that there are no worthy *ministers* or *christians* in the *established* church. They are convinced of the contrary, and take all proper occasions of declaring their sentiments both in public and private. They rejoice in it, and love such with a pure heart, fervently. As to the *Relief*; they doubt not there may be *some* in that connexion, who understand, are hearty friends to, and count it their honour to preach many of the peculiar doctrines of the glorious gospel; nor did they ever question, whether many serious well disposed people in private character have been gathered into that communion.

Notwithstanding, that they disapprove of *promiscuous hearing*, particularly in those societies, is true; though what our author asserts about the *Antiburghers* rebuking all who offend in this article, so far as I know, is a mistake. I never knew any brought under cognisance, who did not *repeat* the offence, and appeared to allow themselves in a *practice* of this kind; except there were some extraordinary circumstances attending it. Nor when such were called to account, was censure carried so far as he represents. However, that our disapprobation has often been expressed by a *sessional admonition* is fact; not from the *fearful apprehension* he speaks of, in instances of hearing in the *Relief*. He must excuse the *Seceders*, if they have neither such an opinion of the *Relief* *shepherds*, nor of their *pastures*, as he insinuates; and charity might have directed him to many things rather than the *craft* of SATAN for their principal motive. Their reasons
for

for this conduct are extensive, and we hope important and praise worthy.

The ministers of the *Secession* are not satisfied with the *reigning principle* of this *promiscuous hearing*.—When we attend divine ordinances at *any* time, in *any* place, or with *any* denomination of our fellow-christians, it certainly ought to be from constraining love to Christ, and the institutions of his grace, with a single eye to his glory in the edification of our souls for eternity; subjecting ourselves to his authority displayed in and by ordinances. We are to receive the word, not as the word of *man*, but the word of the *living God*, in readiness to answer such a question as that to the prophet, “what dost thou *here* *Elijah*?” But when *Seceders* take their place in a worshipping assembly belonging to the *establishment* or the *Relief*, for instance, and are questioned about it, *these things* appear wholly out of view. Not *one* in *twenty* so much as *pretends* any thing more than mere *curiosity*.—They are curious to hear, whether ministers of these ways do indeed preach the gospel; whether all the *foppery* and *affectation*, in style, in manner and action, prevail among them, which has been represented; whether this and the other popular gentleman acquits himself so agreeably as they have heard; perhaps adding, that the *importunity* of a friend carried them off, when they had no intention of it. Now, the *seceding* ministers think themselves bound to check such a principle of *vain curiosity*, whether among themselves, or in respect of other denominations, as sinful in itself, especially in the things of God and eternity, tending to make their people *airy* and *speculative*, so as to prefer the feeding of their *fancy* to the nourishment of their *faith*; and, in a word, laying them under the guilt, and exposing them to the danger of those persons, who “after their own *lusts*, heap to themselves “teachers, having *itching ears*†.”

Besides; such a practice marrs *spiritual improvement*, and is contrary to all *good order* in the church. It is a common *proverb*, that a ‘rolling stone gathers no fog.’ It holds in religious as in civil concerns. A

† 2 Tim. iv. 3.

person continually *gadding* about, from one church and minister to another, is not like to be much wiser or better by his restless assiduity. There is much in the *manner* of a public speaker being familiar to us ; and in such a course this cannot be expected. In all subjects treated in public too, the connexion of purpose is lost ; and every intelligent hearer must be convinced how this injures edification. In short, the person is like “ a wave of the sea, driven of the wind and “ tossed.” Experience assures us, that when people indulge this humour, they fall under a visible decline. If their heads be filled with notions and their tongues unceasingly employed about religion, their hearts are manifestly cold and dead. No wonder ; for it is not the *Lord's way* ; and he will not give us countenance in our *own ways*. He is the God of *order* in all the churches ; and this practice is inconsistent with *all order* ; which requires, that, as Christ has appointed ordinances to be statedly and regularly dispensed in all the congregations of his people, these be punctually attended by us, in the several churches with which we stand connected, when opportunity is granted in providence. How is this necessary regulation, a dictate of reason, and expressly enjoined in scripture, observed, when persons to gratify their humour, for exercise or amusement, to satisfy their curiosity, or even under a pretence of consulting their greater edification, unnecessarily absent from their own place of worship, and make the *tour* perhaps of all the churches within their reach ? Is it not calculated at once to shake them loose, by imperceptible degrees, from any stated and uniform profession of the truth, and hinder the regular practice of the duties of church-fellowship ? If *one* may take this liberty at pleasure, who shall deny a *hundred*, or even *five hundred* the same privilege, when the notion strikes them ? And thus particular churches are occasionally laid desolate, and the dispensation of ordinances suspended ; *anarchy* reigns, and the servants of Christ have only to enquire, “ For what intent have ye sent for me ?”

But tho' there were much less in all this, than any judicious person can allow ; we are extremely sorry to have so frequent and convincing proofs, that many,
who,

who are esteemed the most *orthodox* teachers in our day, neither *do*, nor upon their principles *can*, preach the *uncorrupted* doctrine of the cross. Some boast they can be *Calvinists* in one place, and *Arminians* in another; and it has been found so. Others are a sort of *trimmers*, who, if they don't teach error, to accommodate themselves to the taste of the most respectable in the audience, approach as near the confines of it as possible, and think they come clear off by *hints and equivocal* expressions. A third order avow themselves *Baxterians*, and teach, that faith and repentance are the *conditions* of pardon according to the constitution of a *new law of grace*; that divine power will co-operate with our endeavours, if we are but *sincere* and serious; that the call of the gospel does not extend to all, but is directed only to *sensible* sinners, and persons who are possessed of this and the other good qualification &c. They *corrupt or misrepresent*, in a word, some of the most material articles of gospel-truth, which naturally leads to a perversion of others. And the *Seceding* ministers wish to be "jealous over their people with a godly jealousy, lest by *any* means their minds should be corrupted from the *simplicity* that is in CHRIST," and their eternal interests endangered, or their spiritual progress marred. They know many of their people to be in less danger, because established in the faith, and able to discover the snare; tho' *error* has such advantage from the blindness of mind, and depravity of heart which remain with the best, that they dare not put confidence in the most enlightened; but they are also convinced, that others are only *babes* and "unskilful in the word of righteousness," whom cunning craftiness would more easily deceive; and therefore cannot without some emotion see them in the way of harm.

It is true, our author "ingenuously declares, that he does not think the gospel, both in its doctrinal and practical part, is preached with greater clearness and simplicity in any denomination of Christians in the kingdom, than in the *Relief* society." P. 24 Whatever be his thoughts, some people dispute the fact. It is pretty openly talked by the *Relief* people themselves, that some of their ministers are downright *Arminians*.

A congregation could be mentioned that declares, they would have been shattered to pieces by the continued ministrations of a gentleman in that communion. Be that as it may; we will certainly be allowed to judge of the *Relief* doctrine by the publications, which ministers of that way see meet to oblige the world with. These are such specimens of the *purity and simplicity*, with which the gospel is preached in this society, that we think ourselves under increasing obligations to secure our people against the contagion *.

There

* As to the *simplicity*, which adorns the gospel in the *Relief*, I shall only beg leave to refer the reader to *Mr Boston's* synod sermon, *May 1776*. Upon consulting this curious piece with attention, I doubt not he will agree, that seldom has a more *empty and bombast*, a more *pedantic and unedifying* discourse been pressed into the hands of the public in this kingdom. It is impossible to do justice to the discourse without reading the whole; only, to excite the reader to enquire after it, he will find the subject divided into so many "departments," one of which departments is to shew, "what MAY BE SUPPOSED a violation of our christian liberty." The whole is undertaken and managed "under the AUSPICES of heaven," P. 5; as if the preacher had received his education in the *purlieu* of JUPITER CAPITOLINUS, and were just come from consulting a *Roman Augur*. I say nothing of his pretty *couplets* for characterising our British sovereigns,--such as Pope Henry VIII of *queen-killing memory*, Mary of *blood-thirsty memory*, Elizabeth of *maiden-memory*, her successor, James VI, of *witch-killing memory*, Charles I. of *priest-ridden memory*, Charles II, of *covenant keeping memory*;--because this is only in a note, intended "to amuse an inquisitive and philosophic mind." P. 30.

As to *purity*; it is a pity the same sermon is so poor a specimen of it; for we are there taught, that the "laws of Christ are a transcript of his all-perfect nature, binding as well on account of their own intrinsic excellency, as of the sovereign authority of their Author." P. 6. Has Christ then but ONE nature, or is he GOD-MAN in one mediatory person? If he has *two* natures, are both these *all-perfect*? Is his human nature *independent and infinite*? Is there any law about *baptism* and the *Lord's supper*, and is this *Christ's* law? Is this morally good from its own *intrinsic excellency*, and a transcript of Christ's *all-perfect* nature? Or is the celebration of these ordinances to be resolved into his *sovereign authority ALONE*?

We are further instructed, that it was the "province of the disciples of Christ to publish to mankind the truth as it was revealed to them; and by argument and persuasion to open their

There is still more in this matter. For if we consider the *established Church*;—some of those, who are now esteemed the most sound and pious, were violently intruded into their several parishes. The election

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their understanding for the reception of it." P. 8. An arduous, an *impossible* task indeed ! What man or angel was ever appointed to *open the understanding by argument and persuasion*, or otherwise ? What *finite* power and wisdom can succeed in such an undertaking ? How consistent is this with the plain declarations of scripture and the experience of the saints, Eph. i. 17, 18. 1 Pet. ii. 9. 1 John v. 20. ?

We are also informed with much *pathos*, that "true christian liberty consists in that right, which every man has to judge for himself in matters of religion." P. 7. No man is to judge for another in matters of religion, and impose his sentiments upon him ; but no man living has, or can have, such liberty as is here pretended ; for God has *judged* for him, and laid *his* judgment before us in the word ; and *all* matters of religion presented to us in this word, whether respecting faith or practice, we are indispenibly bound to accept and practise, without gainsaying, delay or murmur. The man who refuses this *implicit* subjection of faith and conscience, must bear his own burden, whatever apology he offer for his conduct. —If it be said, that when any religious system is proposed to a man, he has a right to judge about the truth or error of it ;—we would rather say, he is to make the *Scripture* Judge, or the DIVINE SPIRIT speaking in the scripture, and submissively receive all his decisions, however contrary to his own humours, fancies, or prejudicate opinions. But were we to admit the truth of the assertion, it is still plain, that *true Christian liberty* is so far from *consisting* in this, that it is no branch of *christian liberty* at all. A *Heathen* or a *Mahometan*, a *Hottentot* or a *Tartar*, has as much liberty of this kind as any *Christian* on earth, the *Revd. Mr. Boslon* of *Falkirk* not excepted.

To this most excellent discourse we may join *Mr. Neil's* sermons, lately published. Our author tells us this gentleman's "character was well established for piety, learning and other ministerial endowments; his station in the church of God he not only filled but adorned." Ap. P. 3. Far be it from me to detract from *Mr. Neil's character*; but from the account now given of him, and from his sermons being published under *Mr. Stuart's* inspection, it seems his *doctrine* was esteemed *sound* in the *Relief society*; and this gives me occasion to offer a few remarks upon his discourses; still admitting that he might *think* much better than he sometimes spoke and wrote.

He teaches, that *Baptism* constitutes a child a member of the visible church. "They (the parents) design to devote the child to God in baptism, and thereby constitute it a member of

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of others is not free. True, a moderation is appointed by the *Presbytery*, but the people are staked down in their suffrage. They have but one object to vote upon ; and one too, whom perhaps not five in two thousand

of his visible church." P. 27. Now, *reformed* divines have tenaciously held, that the children of professing parents are born members of the visible church ; and of consequence, that baptism is no more, in respect of the church, than a public acknowledgment or declaration of their membership. It must be so, if we grant, that they are *fæderally* holy, or externally related to God's covenant from their earliest infancy, and derive their membership thro' the profession and membership of their parents. Upon which principle alone it is, that they can have a right to baptism at all. It is plainly taught in scripture, Rom. xi. 16. 1 Cor. vii. 14. It has ever been thought of the last importance against the *Anabaptists* ; and to deny it must be exceedingly dangerous.

He assures us, that the "gospel carries in it, not only the promises of pardon and regeneration, but these duties which God requires of us, and which we owe to him as our creator and preserver ; nay that it means the divine threatenings ;" and he pronounces it "a vain and impious tenet of the *Antinomians* to assert, that the gospel is all promises, but requires no duties." P. 85. This I take to be grossly unscriptural, and dreadfully pernicious. Between the Law and Gospel there is a vast and eternal difference : and to preserve the distinction in the pulpit, and in our exercise is of the greatest importance. Where is the duty which the law does not require ? Where is the threatening which the law does not denounce, that the gospel, to the absolute destruction of its nature, must come in to its aid ? If the law be perfect, as undoubtedly it is, it must reach every duty. Nothing else can fix duty. Nothing else can denounce wrath. To assert the gospel carries in it both duties and threatenings, is to annihilate the distinguishing peculiarity of both law and gospel. It is to turn the law into the gospel, and the gospel into the law, and thereby destroy both ;—that gospel, which is just the report of SALVATION TO MANKIND SINNERS THRO' CHRIST, and knows as little of duties and threatenings, as the law does of Christ and salvation. What is the tenor of it, let prophets answer, Isa. lii. 7. lxi. 1 ; let apostles answer, 2 Cor. v. 19 ; let angels answer, Luke ii. 11, 14.

He thinks, "that God is merciful, is an amiable truth, proclaimed both by the light of nature, as well as divine revelation." P. 135. This cannot be called a new discovery, because fashionable divines have been talking of it for many years, the famous Professor Simpson among others ; tho' indeed he takes in tradition to make up the defects of the light of nature, and therefore went not so far as this preacher. But

ever heard, and therefore, cannot chuse with judgment. If they will not have him, at least they cannot have another, till the *Patron* has once more resolved. Thus it is the *presentation*, and not the election of the

we may be permitted to call it an *imaginary* discovery: For *where is that light of nature? What is that work of God in creation or providence, that gives us the least hint of divine mercy in the pardon of sin and the salvation of the sinner?* They proclaim *many* of his adorable perfections; but whether *pardon*ing mercy be in God at all, they leave under an impenetrable vail. It is to the lively *oracles* of God, which he hath magnified above all other manifestations of his name, that we are wholly indebted for this admirable and most comfortable discovery. *Paul* could observe nothing of it in the light of nature, Rom. i. 19, 20; and their claims are too high who pretend to greater penetration.

He tells us, "it is declared every where in the gospel, both in sense, as well as in express terms, that our offended sovereign is ready to be reconciled to all upon their exercising repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ;" And talks of "free pardon by an offended, but reconcileable God." P. 226, 261. Ah! is our offended sovereign no more than *reconcilable, ready to be reconciled*? Then are the human race undone for ever; for what shall carry this *placable* disposition into *actual* reconciliation? Not "thousands of rams," &c. The whole creation could not accomplish it. But to our unspeakable consolation the scripture teaches other doctrine. It proclaims *actual, full, perfect reconciliation* thro' that great atonement, which *purged, perfectly* purged sin, put it away, made an end of it, and finished transgression. Thence it exhibits almighty God, "in Christ reconciling the world to himself;--well-pleased for his righteousness sake;--the God of peace," who not only loves, but "IS LOVE;" already on a throne of grace,--ready, *presently, perfectly* ready, not to be reconciled, but actually and freely to bestow grace and glory.

He often talks of the *terms* of mercy, and of these terms as very various. "Some of the terms of mercy are above the power of human nature to perform, such as repentance and faith; others are too hard and difficult, such as to be employed in the exercise of mortification and a close application to the various duties of the christian life." P. 235. It is true, he puts this into the mouth of an objector; but then he allows the truth of all. Where does the gospel speak of the *terms* of mercy? It presents *mercy* to us, as *sovereignly, absolutely free* mercy, for the enjoyment of which in its richest fruits, no money nor price of any kind is required. *Faith* is indeed necessary to an interest in the fruits of sovereign mercy;

the people, which brings any man into office on the establishment. The former is all in all; the latter is only a ridiculous farce. And *Seceders* cannot think those regularly called, who come into office under the wing

ry; but while *that faith* itself is a gift of pure mercy, it is not necessary as a *term* or *condition*; but as the hand of the soul, which applies, or takes home the person of Christ and all mercies in him, upon the footing of the record about him, the unlimited offer and grant made of him in the gospel. Were it otherwise, *repentance* has no such place in the new covenant, no such business in salvation as *faith*, though springing from and accompanying it; much less (may we speak of degrees in a case, which cannot admit any) mortification, &c. Why, must we not only believe and repent, but spend a life, or part of a life, in mortification, and close application to Christian duties, before we presume to put in for mercy? *Heartless faith!* *Heartless repentance!* *Heartless mortification!* It is time enough to look for mercy, when we come to die, and have employed all our days in the performance of these terms of mercy. To this we add, it is a very strange distinction, that some of these terms are above the power of nature, others only hard and difficult. Is mortification then, and a close application to the duties of the Christian life, more within the reach of our natural ability, than faith and repentance? If so, our Lord and his servant Paul, must be mistaken; for the former declares, "without me ye can do nothing." The latter, that "we are not sufficient so much as to think any thing as of ourselves."

Other parts of the system are quite agreeable to these things. He seems to suppose, thro' his whole sermons, that *moral seriousness* and *saving grace* are infallibly connected. "God has promised he will enable us to do these things he requires of us, if we pray or ask grace from him." P. 236. Again, speaking of heathens, "we may be sure he will much more hear the cries of sinners under the gospel, who endeavour to repent and apply to him for mercy for the sake of his own dear Son." P. 240. But where is such a connexion stated between the use of means and the special grace of the new covenant? In the neglect of the means, which a gracious God hath appointed, we can expect nothing from him. These he will have honoured; yet we are taught, "the prayer of the wicked," tho' prayer be his duty, "is sin, and an abomination to the Lord," as performed by him. No cries for grace are acceptable, nor can be regarded, where there is not previously grace in the heart, in such exercise as to denominate them *gracious*. In fact, how many have prayed, or asked grace, not only with much *seriousness*, but with the most passionate bursts of tears, under apprehensions of impending ruin, thro' the charges of an alarmed conscience, who never obtain-

wing of an *antichristian usurpation*, and make sacrifice of a *divine ordinance*. Besides, were their entrance into the ministry quite unexceptionable, how are these good men *leaved*? They accept *ordination*

obtained it? How many have *endeavoured to repent and apply for mercy*, in their own way, who were never favoured with *gospel repentance*, or had any share in *saving mercy*? To how many convinced sinners has God said in effect, as well as in the words of inspiration, "When you spread forth your hands, 'I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when you make many 'prayers, I will not hear.'"

He represents the "obedience of the divine Surety as capable to recommend our sincere tho' imperfect services to the divine acceptance and reward," P. 261. The very stile of moderate *Arminians*, all the *Neonomians*, and the most learned and humble of the *Papists*. It "recommends our sincere tho' imperfect services to the divine acceptance." No; done in faith, it makes them *actually accepted*. Presented on the footing of his great atonement, and with an eye to his glorious intercession, they are not recommended to the divine attention, as if there were some intrinsic worth in them; but they are in HIM, only in and thro' HIM, "an odour of a sweet 'smell.'" They come from us weak, very weak and imperfect indeed, under the most sensible aids of divine grace; but they are presented by him to the Father *perfect*, all their defects being covered by the incense of his glorious mediation — "They are recommended to the divine reward," No; there is nothing in them deserving reward, not even thro' the obedience of Christ. No *proper reward* is assigned to them. All that the saints receive, when enabled to perform the highest service, is of *grace*; not partly from their services, partly thro' Christ recommending them; but absolutely of *grace*, reigning and triumphant GRACE, and wholly thro' CHRIST. It is a reward, which HE merited, not *they*; a reward not on the footing of the work performed by them, one way or other, in any degree or in any thing; but still greater *privilege* bestowed in the way of duty, or in consequence of the course of duty being finished.

He teaches, that "our Creator has sent us into this world as into a state of trial, and has set before us an endless happiness or misery; and has assured us, that either the one or the other must be our final portion, when this world is over, according as we have behaved ourselves in it." To which the foregoing sentiment perfectly agrees, that "death puts an end to that season which God hath assigned us to prepare and work for a future world." P. 425 What votary of free will, *Socinian* or *Arminian*, could talk in a more loose and unscriptural manner? We appeal to every intelligent reader, whether this representation is not strictly applicable to *Adam in ignorance?*

on by the hands of the most *erroneous*, and of the most despicable *Intruders*; they assist at their *sacramental solemnities*, and invite their assistance in return: *for* some never went so far, don't they cultivate all the

cence? To his fallen race it can have no relation. It would take much time to illustrate all the *spirit of error* collected in these words. We shall only therefore observe, that not a son of *Adam* is in a state of *trial*. He is either in a state of *sin* and *condemnation*, or in a state of *acceptance* thro' *Christ* and an *heir* of the eternal inheritance. From the latter no believer can fall, tho' our preacher should call him a "*candidate of eternal life*." P. 270. Into this blessed state, a person may be translated from the *other*,--a state of *sin* and *condemnation*; yet neither is that a *probationary* state. However a man behave, he cannot work himself out of it. To change his condition is the work of God alone. And whoever continues in it, the wrath of God abideth on him. It is not uncertain whether all the fury of *Jehovah's* power will be discharged upon him. This is infallibly sure; and for the present, in the most prosperous outward condition, the storm is already broke.

He insists, that "the knowledge and love of God, faith in *Christ* and holiness, are by the constitution of heaven made the great and necessary qualifications to eternal life." P. 457; again, that "faith in the Lord *Jesus* by the constitution of heaven is made the qualifying condition for glory and immortality." P. 443. What is meant by these modes of expression, I will not pretend to determine; they are somewhat uncommon: but *qualifications* and *conditions* are so unlike the spirit of the gospel, and appear so natively to imply some merit at least of *congruity*, that I heartily wish them *cashiered*. We admit, that the sanctification of the Spirit is a believer's *meetness* for the enjoyment of the heavenly state; but then we consider it, in all its branches, not as a *necessary qualifying condition*, but an *essential part of eternal life*; as much so as the immediate vision and enjoyment of God in glory. "He that hath *the Son* hath" already, in the earnest and pledge, "everlasting life. It is life eternal to know the Father, and *Jesus Christ* whom he hath sent." And what way a part of any thing, an *essential part*, should be a *necessary qualification*, or a *qualifying condition* of that thing, is far from being obvious.

A great many other passages of these sermons might be produced equally exceptionable; but those quoted may suffice for a sample. All of them are manifestly unscriptural, and some of them subversive of the whole gospel. If such doctrine be common in the *Relief*, as there is every reason to fear it is, their writers would do well to boast less of their orthodoxy; and must excuse *Seceders*, tho' they prohibit their people from sitting under "another gospel than that which they have received."

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the intimacies of ministerial and Christian communion with many of this character, when invited by others? A Calvinist makes no scruple to give place to an Arminian or Socinian, or to take the pulpit after him; and to seal their friendship, they sit down at the same sacramental table. We need not remark their stated and necessary connexion, in all presbyterial or synodical acts of government and discipline; that is palpable and common. Is the apostle's maxim true, that "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" Surely then these ministers, however respectable in their persons or administrations, are leavened in the corrupt com-

Mr. Bain's sermons have certainly much merit. The expression, for the most part, is neat and pretty, the style simple and easy. But I am sorry to find so many things favouring of the same spirit of legality and error, as in Mr. Neil's; and on the same subjects too. The public have a right, after this observation, to know particulars. Like his brother, he thinks, "in baptism we are brought in to God's house;" not that receiving the seal of God's covenant supposes we have place there already. P. 200. He considers church members as "candidates for heaven by profession;" and observes that "it is a reproach for a candidate for heaven, to be slothful or ignorant" about his real character. P. 143, 310. Speaking of the gospel, he finds it "true, that the religion of nature, and the whole obligations to piety and virtue, which reason can approve, are adopted into this plan, and an essential branch of it." P. 314. He informs us, that "it belongs to Christ's royal power, to prescribe the terms of salvation"—P. 38;—That "his death renders the deity placable." P. 267; that "if we consider them, (the elect) as described in the gospel revelation, and qualified for the blessings promised there, they are believers in Christ, his willing and holy people." P. 280; and, that in the New Testament there is "mercy to give repentance, and to pardon us when penitent." P. 287. To such doctrine the above strictures on Mr. Neil's sermons will apply. There are other things in these discourses which I cannot pretend to understand, and therefore shall say nothing about them, but must leave them to greater divines; such as, "that grace" by which he tells us he understands "the free and most excellent favour of God, with all the precious fruits of it, to the unworthy and miserable, -reigns thro' a righteousness implanted in us." P. 28, 35; that believers have, as a distinguishing privilege of sonship, "a title to incorruption and immortality;—or," which it seems is the same, "a blessed resurrection." P. 202; and "that the testament of Jesus the Mediator, receives great force and validity from his resurrection." P. 286.

munion of this *national church*. Made partakers of other mens sins, we speak it with the deepest regret, they themselves cannot be *pure*. And when we go to hear such a minister, we cannot view him merely in his amiable personal character and in the purity of his administrations; but as a *member* and *minister* of an *incorrigibly corrupt* church, and *kneaded* in the same impure ecclesiastical mass. Men may talk of separating these things, but it is impossible. While *Seceders* think it so, they must be pardoned for judging, that to hear the most *valuable* minister that ever filled a pulpit, in these circumstances, is, not quite so *innocent* as some would have them believe.

It is true, our author asserts that *Relief* ministers enter upon the ministerial office by the *free* election of the people, and have *regular* Presbyterianial ordination." P. 23. 24. However, *Seceders* question *both*. They question the *first*;--because, the *general* rule, from which there must be very few exceptions, if any, in the choice of the *first* minister in a *Relief* congregation, is, as before observed †, that *none* be allowed to vote, but those who have *property* in the place of worship, or *contributed* to build it. Want of *money* will exclude the most holy christian; a device unknown in scripture, which so changes the nature of that election Christ hath appointed, that it is an insult on *common sense* to call it *free*, and must preclude any man from a *right* to exercise a ministry upon the footing of it. They question the *second*;---because we cannot allow the *Presbyteries* in this interest to be rightly *constituted* courts of Christ; or supposing their constitution scriptural, that they are *faithful* in the *trust* committed to them, and the necessary *duties*, which the King of Zion expects from them.

We cannot admit, that they are *rightly constituted* courts of Christ; because, on the ground abovementioned, it is manifest, that many of the ministers came not in by the *door*, but climbed up *some other way*; and all may know what name our Lord gives to such. Besides; since they will plead, that they are not in a state of separation from the *established church*, out of which they came, how is it possible they can have a right to the exercise of the keys as a *separate* independent

† *Relief scheme*, &c. P. 10.

pendent body ? yet such exercise they have assumed. Nay, and were they to consider themselves as a distinct *separate* society, in which light all men must view them, their claim is not more valid ; partly because, as they never took the *necessary* steps for the honour of Christ, the recovery of the *national church*, or their own exoneratation, in order to separation, so the grounds of their separation are *unwarrantable*. Our author speaks of only *two* things the synod of *Relief* find faulty in the *established church*,—the law of *patronage*, and *legal preaching* by some of its ministers. Now these things in themselves, tho' disagreeable enough and highly pernicious, never can be a *sufficient* reason for deserting any church, as I am ready to demonstrate upon a proper call, if any can think a matter so clear needs illustration. At present it may suffice to observe, that no divines ever thought so. No *lawful* separation in the world was ever so stated.—Partly because, were their ostensible grounds of separation more weighty and valid, there is not the least credible evidence, that it originated from scriptural zeal for the truth of the gospel, the rights of the church, and in all for the glory of Christ, but from a spirit of *faction*, *discontent* and *restlessness*. Had it not been for the predominancy of this humour in some aspiring minds, the foundation of the *Relief* church would not yet have been laid. If these things be so, the *Relief* Presbyteries can have no authority from Jesus Christ, to meet for the exercise of the keys ; and therefore no *regular* ordination can be received from them. After this, whether the ministers in that way are indeed the *called* and *sent of God*, my reader shall judge.

Supposing their courts *rightly constituted* ; we cannot admit, that they are *faithful in the trust* committed to them, and the duties which the king of Zion expects from them. They decline any *open* and *honest* testimony for the truths and ordinances of the Redeemer. They will not so much as favour the world, or do justice to themselves by a declaration of their principles ; even when it is importunately and incessantly called for. So far from making a resolute *scriptural* stand for the interests of Christ, and against a dreadful increasing course of defection in this *national*

church, they approve of, and contend for *some* of these defections, and even give the most *solemn* and undoubted consent to *all*, while they join in her *sacramental fellowship*, and suffer their people to do so at pleasure ; not to speak of that extravagant and *ruinous* scheme of *communion* they have adopted ; the unscriptural nature and great iniquity of which, we have before proved †. What then becomes of that *trust* Christ hath committed to his church, and the judicatories of it ? Are these his professed ministers acting *for* or *against* him ? Are they “ gathering with him,” or are they not rather “ scattering abroad ?” Whatever be the sentiment of others, *Seceders* are at no loss about these things ; and must be of opinion, that as their submission occasionally to the ministry of the *best* minister on the *establishment* is giving them encouragement to continue in the communion of an *impure apostate* church, so to hear members of the *Relief* synod is a tacit approbation, not only of their *constitution*, but of *all* they *have* done, and *are* doing against the glory and interests of Christ in our times.

Moreover, the *Seceders* are engaged in an open *Testimony* for the whole reformation cause, as that was espoused and maintained by the church of *Scotland* in her purest times. This *testimony* is stated and managed against the several societies around them, who, in their view, at least, do not endeavour to confess Christ to the world with *uniformity*, *consistence* and *steadiness*. Much of it is turned against the *established* and *Relief* churches. Reproach and ridicule, shame and suffering in abundance, they have met with on this account, and perhaps harder things are before them : But they dare not upon any consideration, play *fast* and *loose* with the trust which Christ has committed to them, to be kept inviolate in their own day, and transmitted to posterity. At the same time, they are satisfied, that to attend ordinances as dispensed in the *established* and *Relief* churches, or the like, must fix the charge of *wavering* and *irresolution* in holding their testimony. It *weakens* it, nay, is an interpretative *falling from it*, in so far as pointed against these denominations respectively ; just as for a *Protestant* to join in

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† *Relief scheme*, &c. P. 46,---63.

the public worship of the *Romish* church, or a *Calvinist* to join with a *Socinian* synagogue,—is *materially* to drop his testimony against these pretended churches. Don't mistake us, we are far from setting the *established* church of Scotland, and the *Relief* church on the same foot with those of *Rome* and *Socinus*. We readily acknowledge both the *former* to be *true* churches, tho' very *corrupt* ones, which we cannot grant as to either of the *latter*; but every judicious person must see the *inconsistency* to be the same in both cases. The question is not, whether our *Testimony* be a *necessary*, a *just* and *scriptural* one? It would be absurd to suppose, the *established* or *Relief* church think so; because in this they would condemn themselves: But the question is, whether we, who are satisfied it has these characters, can, in a consistency with ourselves, sit under ordinances as dispensed in these churches; and in this we are willing to abide by the verdict of *common sense*.

To this I shall only beg leave to add, that the *offence* of *christian brethren* deserves great consideration. Had I no scruple in my own mind to hear in the *established* or *Relief* churches, &c. if some of my *weaker* brethren hold my conduct in this matter, to be injurious to Christ and his interests, strengthening to the hands of an unfaithful ministry and lukewarm church-members, inconsistent with that solemn profession, which I have made together with them, and consequently are grieved and stumbled; I am certainly bound to abstain from such practices. Admit that no real offence is given; I see it is taken; and does not the *law of love* oblige me to avoid every thing which may hinder the edification of the *weakest*, while this indulgence is consistent with the duty which I owe to God, and does not set *their prejudices* higher than *his authority*? Let the Apostle determine the point. "But judge this rather, that no man put a *stumbling-block*, or an *occasion* to fall in his brother's way.—It is good neither to eat flesh nor drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother *stumbleth*, or is *offended*, or is *made weak*," Rom. xiv. 13, 21. Again, "When ye sin against the *brethren*, and wound their *weak* conscience, ye sin against CHRIST." On this principle
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he himself acted, 1 Cor. viii. 12, 13. In both these passages he speaks of things in themselves *lawful*; yet when the use of them is with *offence* to the very weakest brother, the apostle declares it to be sinful. The high tide of *prejudice* against *Seceders* on the article of *promiscuous hearing* must be my excuse for dwelling so long upon a plain point; the rather, as nothing has yet been offered to the public upon that subject. If they be in an error, their mistake is to themselves; and they know they must account for it to God. The more enlightened will *pity* and *pray* for them, others will do as they please.

However, it may be some encouragement, that the *synod of Relief* go so far with *Seceders* in this matter. That *respectable* body "unanimously agree with us, that it is *unlawful* to hear *legal* and *unsound* preachers;" and also, "that it is *unlawful* and *sinful* to hear *intruders*, who have *violently thrust* themselves into particular charges, in the church of Christ." P. 22. When they duly enquire into the grounds of our common opinion about these articles, they may soon perceive, on what principles *Seceders* think their disapprobation of *promiscuous hearing*, in other instances, justifiable. What secures them, will at least be a pretty good *out-work* for our defence.

Only, I cannot help observing the glaring inconsistency of the *Relief Synod* on this head. Mr *Hutchinson* assigns it as a reason of its being unlawful to hear *Intruders*, that "such have not entered in by Christ, the door, by the way of his appointment, viz. the call and invitation of his flock; but have climbed up some other way, by virtue of a *presentation* to the legal benefice; and by doing so, have at once robbed Christ of his *authority*, and his people of their *liberty*." P. 22. for he teaches, that "to the *lawful* exercise and discharge of the ministerial function, in any particular and fixed station, the call, consent, and approbation of those who are to be under that ministry, is indispensibly necessary; and that none have a *right* to exercise any office in the church of God without such a call to it." Part 2. P. 4, 5. Who would not think this a good argument at *all* times, and in relation to *all* persons? But we greatly mistake the *Relief Synod* if

if we would suppose they mean it to conclude against any other than a *Scotch Intruder*. The reader will be *serious* ;

For, it is well known, that the law of *patronage*, possessing the plenitude of power in *England* and *Ireland*, operates with much more despotism in these countries, than in *Scotland*, even at this day. In *parochial* churches, so far is the *CALL* of the *people* from being thought *essential* to the discharge of the ministry among them, that not even a *shadow* of it exists.— Their consent and approbation is not so much as *sought*. Their complaints cannot be *heard*. In a moment the *presentation* silences every murmur. Besides ; the *King* being, by the *constitution* of the realm, the *visible head* of the church, all church-power flows from him, and all church officers are the *creatures* of his *spiritual supremacy*. He gives them being, and annihilates them at pleasure ; none presuming to enquire, What dost thou ? Even the *Bishop*, in the highest acts of his authority, *ordination* and *induction* not excepted, is no more than the *deputy* of the *SOVEREIGN*. The consequence is, according to our author's fundamental and very just maxim, that no *minister* in these churches can *lawfully* discharge his function. Why, he comes not in by the *door*, but, in a very different way from the most *violent Intruder* in this country, climbeth up *some other way*, and in all ministerial duties is the servant of the *PRINCE*. Yet the *Synod of Relief* and our *sagacious* writer among the rest, do not find it in the least unlawful to hear *him*. Hear *him* ! If he be but found in the *essential* doctrines of Christianity, they will receive him into the closest ministerial and *Christian communion*. Thus entrance into the ministerial office in virtue of a *presentation*, the very *boldest* and most *iniquitous intrusions*, in themselves considered, are no object of *Relief* detestation, but derive all their criminality from *local circumstances*. To paint a *Scotch Intruder* as black as the *devil*, serves some valuable ends ; but an *English* or *Irish Intruder* shall be received as an *angel of God*. The one is excommunicated from the *Relief* church ; the other shall be cherished with maternal tenderness, when
he

he pleases to give her an opportunity of displaying her blind affection.

This brings me to our author's THIRD head,--- the unscriptural narrowness of our terms of communion. The less need be offered here, as the argument formerly advanced against the *Relief scheme* of church fellowship stands in its full force. Mr *Hutchinson* is so far from destroying it, in its *principles* or otherwise, that he was wise enough scarce to come within sight of it. Let it but have a fair hearing, and I am perfectly willing it be left to its fate with the impartial, without any reinforcement. And as the scheme of communion adopted in the *Secession*, and that of which the *Relief* boast, are so directly opposite, the argument against the latter, goes every necessary length in establishing the former : This all will perceive, who take the trouble to examine it. I shall therefore only beg my reader's attention to a few things on this point.

Our author is pleased to rest the *Relief scheme* of communion, as opposed to that held by *Seceders*, upon two pillars; both which, we shall see, are rotten to the heart.

One of these is, that " office-bearers may warrantably admit any man to the participation of the sacred supper, who has a suitable measure of knowledge and a conversation becoming the gospel." P. 37. He spends much time in illustrating and proving what nobody denies, that these two are *necessary qualifications* in all who apply for church privileges; but instead of attempting to set aside what is offered for another requisite of church fellowship, he is so prudent as not once to hint, that ever such a thing had been contended for. I say prudent; for it is impossible but that he must know, that it is a CAPITAL point in debate; which once admitted, overturns the whole *Relief scheme* of communion to the foundation.

What I mean is, a pure profession of the truth, known and believed. It is true, this is fallen into great discredit in our times. It is turned into ridicule. Once to mention it as the duty of Christians, a matter of consequence to the glory of Christ, the edification of the church, and the conviction of the world, is worse than

than heresy in the eyes of many. But this will prejudice none, to whom the word of God is *precious*. From the beginning it was not so. An *honest profession* of the truth, Christ puts a *high estimate* upon, Rev. ii. 13. It is represented as no less *necessary* in its place, and for its own purposes, than *faith* itself, Rom. x. 9, 10. A severe mark is put on those, who thro' fear or shame, or any other corrupt principle, *decline it*, Mat. viii. 38. *Stedfastness* in it is strictly enjoined, Heb. x. 23. *Apostacy* from it is severely censured and threatened, Luke ix. 32. Heb. x. 38. We need not, therefore, be surprised to find, tho' *ruining* to the *Relief* cause, that it was made an *essential prerequisite* of communion in the visible church, in the purest times of Christianity.

Philip had, no doubt, good evidence of the proficiency which the *Ethiopian Eunuch* had made under his instructions, was perfectly satisfied with his religious knowledge, and his fixed purpose to walk circumspectly, through grace, in all things; yet he would not admit him to the sacrament of *baptism* till he made a *confession* of Christ in the great truth, then especially controverted. "What doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God." It was only in consequence of this declaration, that the seal of the covenant was dispensed to him, Acts viii. 36, 37, 38. Whatever his knowledge or appearance of piety were, had he refused to *confess* Christ, or been *imperfect* in his *confession*, this would have been sufficient, in the view of the *Evangelist*, to have debarred him from this ordinance. The same rule was observed on similar occasions. Thus we are told, that "they that gladly received the word were baptized;" not they who simply *knew* it, and against whose outward deportment there lay *no exception*; but they who *received* the gospel truths set before them, and *declared* in a proper manner their acceptance of them; for without this, it was impossible to know who received them. Those only were baptized. And after this, it was *only* in the way of *continuing* in the apostles *doctrine*, which they had re-

ceived that they enjoyed their fellowship, Acts ii. 41, 42. Agreeably to all which, we find communion with the *erroneous*, or those who *turn away* from the *profession* of the truth, be the occasion of their error, and reasons of their apostasy, their knowledge or external conduct what they may, expressly prohibited. "He that is an heretick, after the first and second admonition, *reject*," 1st. iii. 10 "If there come *any* unto you, and bring not *this doctrine*, receive him not into your house; neither bid him God speed." Why so? "For he that biddeth him God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds," 2 John 10. 11. Had our author and his friends lived in these times, it is highly probable, they would have declared this *condition* of church communion a gross *imposition* on the children of God. Yet how they come to talk so high is strange;—

For, it is the doctrine of *this church*, to which they pretend an adherence, that a *profession* of the faith, which must certainly be more than the *knowledge* of it, and a *regular conversation* is an *indispensible condition* of church membership*. Hence our former laudable practice of taking a *declaration* of the faith of church-members in order to the baptism of their children; and secluding those from her communion, who were *erroneous* and *unsound*, as well those in private, as those in public station in the church.

Now I think the only question can be, *what profession* was required and sustained in the apostolic age, and is intended by our church in her *standards*? A *scriptural* one surely;—a profession agreeable to the *word*, and that expressed the *faith* of the church in the several truths, in which she had been enlightened; more expressly and particularly, *those* that were eminently opposed and impugned. Can we imagine the apostles, and primitive churches under their care, sustained a profession as opening the door to church-fellowship, which cast off, and stood in opposition to the *received* faith of Christ? That they did not, we are as sure as the whole tenor of New Testament writing can make us. Shall we presume to mark out a

* Shorter Catechism, Q. 95. Lar. Cat. Q. 66.

way different from, nay opposite to the good old path, that has the sanction of such authority? Did the planters of the Christian church make an honest, uniform *profession* of the truth a term of admission to sealing ordinances, no less than a competency of knowledge and irreproachable conversation? And shall the new *schemers* of these times, make bold to brand it with ignominy, and cast it out of the church? And it is to be observed, that when we insist upon this *profession*, as a condition of membership, we do not go beyond the *fruits* expected of Christians, of which our author talks so much: for it is our fixed persuasion, that true faith, in its *proper exercise*, will show itself no less in the *purity* of a man's *profession* than of his conversation. From this the conclusion is obvious and undeniable, that we are no more bound to esteem him who offends in the *former*, a *regular*, a *faithful* and *fruitful* church-member, than him who offends in the *latter*. Both, according to scripture, are to be debarred from the communion of the church, tho' many things amiable in other respects be found about them; till she be satisfied of their repentance for these bitter fruits, and of their gracious concern to glorify Christ, and edify her by *fruits* of a different kind; all our author's loose discourse about *uncharitableness*, *bigotry*, *arrogance*, and what not, upon this subject, goes for just nothing. He might as well have entertained us with *Barbara*, *Celarent*, *flap*, *flap*, or *Tom Thumb*. The same is to be said of all his reasonings, concerning "perfect unanimity in every thing not being necessary to church-fellowship." P, 51, 52, 53, 54; because no body pleads for it. If people will fight with their *shadow*, instead of abiding by the point in debate, what shall a wise man do, but laugh at their *Quixotism*?

The *other* pillar, on which our author is bold enough to venture the *Relief* Scheme of communion is, his gloss on the first six verses of the fourteenth chapter to the Romans. Here he proceeds with much learning and caution; by an elaborate *paraphrase*; a set of *native deductions*, applied to the case in hand; and then follows the destruction of these *evasions* and *subterfuges*, which he supposes *Seceders* will have re-

course to. He is so well-pleased with the strength of this *fortress*, as to give himself no trouble to throw up even an *out-work* from any other passage of scripture. The *whole* scheme then stands or falls with this, as far as *scripture* is concerned. If we can successfully storm this hold, our author will certainly yield his *sword*.

Convinced in experience, that the friends of *Relief* make no small noise with this passage, I was at some pains formerly to state the controversy in the church of *Rome*, and shew, that no argument could be taken from it in favour of *Relief* communion †; expecting if it must still be brought on the carpet, that they would have at least endeavoured to detect the fallacy of my reasoning on it. But here too, our author turns *helm a-lee*; only observing, in order to stand off with some seeming decency, that *Seceders* will maintain that the matters in debate in this church were *intirely indifferent*; and therefore we ought not to argue, that the matters of difference between *Presbyterians*, *Episcopalians* and *Independents*, relating to church-government, should be an object of *forbearance* also; as they are things not *indifferent*. To which he gives a very short, and as we shall see, unsatisfactory reply. Yes indeed, Sir, they maintain this; only, correcting a small mistake, by certifying you, that the difference we have with *Episcopalians* and *Independents*, is not merely in relation to *church government*. And if it can be made good, that the matters in debate in this church were *entirely indifferent*, the *stately* fabric you have reared, by *paraphrase* and *deduction*, falls about your ears in an instant. What say you against it, "Tho' the observation, or non-observation of ceremonial usages, after the death of Christ, was a thing intirely indifferent in itself, when connected with religion; yet this was not the state of that famous controversy." P. 65.

To a judicious, impartial person, enough has already been said upon this subject. However, truth can lose nothing by a repeated and still more close examination. By a thing *indifferent* is meant, what is nei-

† *Relief scheme*, &c. P. 85,---93.

ther *duty* by any law in force enjoining it, nor *sin* from any law *prohibiting* it. Now, that *many* ceremonial rites were, for a season, in this sense, which we suppose is the sense universally received, *wholly indifferent*, seems clear as noon-day. Every man, who knows what he says, must grant, that the whole *ceremonial law* was abrogated in the death of Christ. Its institutions after this, were no longer of divine obligation upon any. But neither was the observation of some of them for a time discharged. There is no such prohibition upon record. It is probable, that most, if not all the *Jewish* converts throughout the world, were, for a considerable season, in the practice of various legal rites. It was remarkably so at *Jerusalem*. "Thou seest, brother, how many thousand Jews there are which believe, and they are all *zealous* of the law," Acts xxi. 20.; and can we believe, that so many churches, under the eye of the apostles, were allowed to live in the practice of what God had peremptorily forbidden? No certainly. More; it is evident the apostles themselves set the churches an example of this. It is pretty clear in the case of *James*, Acts xxi.; of *Peter*, Gal. ii. 14; nor must we except *Paul* himself. "He sheared his head in Cenchrea, for he had a vow," Acts xviii. 18. "He took the men, and the next day purifying himself, entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them, Acts xxi. 26. He even carried it the length of circumcising *Timothy*, Acts xvi. 3.--- Were the apostles then at once the *patrons* and the *perpetrators* of open sin? If not, what could these usages be but matters of *indifference*? That those observed in the church of *Rome* in particular, were so, is manifest. "Let every man," says the apostle, "be fully persuaded in his own mind." Is any man persuaded, that these rites are binding upon him, and therefore ought to be observed? It is well; let him please himself. Is any man again persuaded, that they are not obligatory, nor should in the the least be respected by him? This also is well; let him act accordingly. The only point is, that no man *observe* these things,

things, or *abstain* from them, with offence, or a doubtful mind, ver. 20, 22.

Notwithstanding that these same *indifferent* things were *connected with religion*, is so plain, that it is astonishing any man of sense should insinuate the contrary; much more risque an important cause on it. The apostle expressly states such a connexion; for he that "regarded the day, regarded it *unto the LORD*;" out of respect to his sovereign authority, which he weakly thought interposed in this matter; and of consequence, spent much of it, no doubt, in his immediate service; "and he that ate not, *to the LORD* he ate not;" on the same account and from a religious scruple. Did not this set the observation of certain days, and abstinence from certain meats, in the very *closest* connexion with *religion*? In fact, it was impossible, that a practical, devout attention to these rites could be *unconnected* with religion; because they were considered as of *divine* obligation, and thus a piece of *indispensible* duty toward God; the neglect of which was supposed to make a person heinously guilty in his sight. And as to the days mentioned in particular, they were devoted to, and employed in *religious worship*. Was not this the very controversy the *Gentile* part of the church had with their brethren of the *Jews*, who contended for these usages? On this very account they despised them, and had thoughts of cutting them off from their fellowship,—even because they were observed on *religious* principles, with *religious* views, as *religious* divine institutions, in which *much* of *religion*, or the kingdom of God was thought to consist. Now, if these things, so very *intimately* connected with religion, as really to make a part of it, in the case of the *Jewish* converts, were yet for a season left *absolutely indifferent*, the very weakest person must see, our author has clearly lost his point. Nor is it possible, with all the aids the *Relief* synod can bring him, to frame an argument from this case of the church of *Rome*, for communion with *Prelatists* and *Independents*.

But perhaps he means, that as the *Jewish* converts maintained that these ceremonial usages were still *divine* ordinances, so they got them introduced into the

public worship of the church, and made the observati-
on of them the *condition* and *rule* of communion;
which effectually brings them out of the class of
things *indifferent*. It was indeed; and this may be
his meaning; for he talks about things *indifferent* in
their own nature, when brought into the *worship* of
God, and held to be divine ordinances, ceasing to be
indifferent; adding "this was the *true* state of the
controversy; for the *Jewish* Christians maintained,
that abstaining from ceremonial meats, and observing
ceremonial days, were still of divine authority, and
ordinances of God to be observed by the new testa-
ment church; which brought these things entirely out
of the predicament of things *indifferent*, and presents
them to our view in a very different attitude." This
he illustrates by *kneeling* in partaking of the Supper:
"*Kneeling* is in itself *indifferent*; but when it is requi-
red as an ordinance of God, and necessary to the par-
ticipation of the sacrament, is it then a matter of in-
difference?" P. 65. 66.

Not to insist on their making the observance of *Mo-
saic* rites the *rule* and *condition* of communion with
them, what evidence has our author that they intro-
duced these into the *public worship* of the church at
all? He offers none. He does not give us the least
hint where we may be furnished in any. Indeed it is
as ridiculous a *figment* as ever entered a human mind.
Is there any thing like it supposed in this chapter, in
the whole epistle, or in any part of scripture? Nay,
it is demonstrably false. Nothing is mentioned by the
apostle as matter of debate in this church, but the dis-
tinction of *meats* and *days*. Now the *former* did not
admit of a place in the *public worship* of the church.
As observed among the people, it had no relation to,
or connexion with it, in any generation. And if so,
what fancy could introduce it, and what end could be
served by it in the *public worship* of the new Testa-
ment church? By the days in question it is evident,
and indeed generally agreed, that we are to under-
stand some *Jewish festivals*. Some of these were of a
public nature, and for the sake of argument we shall
suppose, that the *Jewish* Christians pleaded for the
punctual celebration of them, tho' this is a mere con-
jecture,

jecture, and a very improbable one too ; but how does it appear they carried so important a point in the church of *Rome* ? The *Gentile* converts, at least, together with the more enlightened *Jews*, were a very great majority in this church. This is implied in the whole address in this chapter. These were not only perfectly satisfied about the abolition of the ceremonial law, but had an utter abhorrence of its rites as observed by their brethren. Is it then in any degree credible, that the *Jewish* Christians, who bare so small a proportion to the whole church, were despised, and ill used on account of their weak prejudices, had so much credit and influence as to procure the *public celebration* of any *Jewish festival* ? True, they might observe these days in a distinct *separate* assembly ; but this is no where insinuated, nor is there the least presumption on any ground that they did so. It would have given the controversy quite another turn, and the apostle's discourse would have run in another stile. Whatever some *zealots* might insist for, all they attained was the observation of *meats* and *days* in their *personal unconnected* capacity, not as *members* of the church, but as so many *individuals*. Hence the apostle speaks of what one *did*, and another *neglected*, in his *single* state, just as it pleased him, ver, 2, 3, 5, 6. From this it follows, that these legal rites, as obtaining in *that* church, no way affected the system of new Testament ordinances. They neither corrupted the *whole*, nor set aside, or altered any *part* of them.--- They made *no part* of the worship of the church, nor were in the *least* connected with it.

Moreover, he takes it for granted, that as this was the real state of the church of *Rome*, so the apostle permitted things to run in their former channel. What did he ? He saw the authority of his divine master daringly counteracted, the *Gentile* converts enslaved, the system of new Testament ordinances changed, by a spirit of *despotism* and *imposition* in all things triumphant, not only with *silence*, but avowed *approbation*. If the *Jewish* Christians, full of the notion that ceremonial rites were still divine ordinances, forced them into the worship of the church, and made
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the *rule* and *condition* of their communion; I think, none will deny, this was the *scene* presented to the apostle: and that he carried, notwithstanding, very *smoothly*, is no less plain; for it was enough in his judgment, that "every man was persuaded in his own mind;" and he exhorts the members of this church to bear with one another in meekness and love, never suffering their differences in the least to affect their fellowship, ver. 17, 18, 19. But who will have the assurance thus to impeach his faithfulness?—his faithfulness, who was so *zealous* for the honour of Christ, and the liberties of Christians; who was so *jealous* of the truth of the gospel, and purity of ordinances, while a *keen*, a *sworn enemy* to all usurpation in the church of God. How his zeal would have burnt against such indignities done his Redeemer, and against so flagrant, so ruinous injuries done his people and interests,—his conduct at *Antioch*, at *Jerusalem*, through *Galatia*, and indeed wherever he came, is a convincing evidence.

Indeed, upon the principle here laid down, from the *true* state of the controversy in the church of *Rome*, the power of the church, or of some in it, call him *Pope* or *Prince*, call them *convention* or *council*, or what you will, to establish human inventions in the worship of God, must no longer be contested, but universally believed and submitted to. For, wherein consists this power, as claimed and exercised in the churches of *Rome* and *England*, with some others, but in a *right* of bringing things in their own nature *indifferent* into the worship of God, and enjoining the observance of them? Does not much of the *Romish superstition*, and all the *fantastical* ceremonies of the church of *England*, stand upon this pretended power alone? It is for more than one unworthy cause, therefore, that our author stands forth a determined advocate. We shall charitably hope, he has not examined his argument, nor traced its consequences. But the conclusion is evident, that any way he chuses to be taken, he will never find a warrant for communion with *Prelatists* and *Independents* from the state of the ancient church of *Rome*.—Whatever was the opinion or practice of the *Jewish* converts about some ce-

ceremonial rites, the matter was for a season *wholly indifferent*; but the points debated with *Prelatists* and *Independents* are of quite another nature. Whatever were the sentiments of the *former* about *Jewish* observances, we have just now demonstrated, that these got no place in the church; and therefore did not in the least affect her *state*, or the nature and tenor of her *administration*; whereas the *latter* have carried their opinions and inventions into *full and established practice*; have cast the church into a mould of *their own*, not only *unknown* in scripture, but *reprobated* by it; have changed her ordinances, corrupted her worship, and leavened her whole administration; while they malign, insult and impugn that church state, and entire frame of ordinances, which we as *Presbyterians* are firmly persuaded Christ the *sole LAW GIVER* in Zion hath appointed in his word. In this case, I leave any man to judge, whether *our* communion with the *latter* stands on the same grounds, as the communion of the *Gentile* church-members at *Rome* with their *Jewish* brethren did.

One observation more, and we are done with this point. It is this, - that were the cases of the *Jewish* converts at *Rome*, and that of *Prelatists* and *Independents* much more parallel than any man can rationally conceive, the *former* had a claim to unspeakably more *lenity* and *forbearance* than the *latter*; because these usages, to which they were so zealously attached, were *once* of *divine* appointment, much depended upon the due observation of them, and several passages both of *Moses* and the *prophets*, which they continued to hold as a part of the rule of faith and practice, at first view, and when not taken in connexion with other parts of scripture, appeared to give them a perpetual establishment in the church. It is easy to see, how much these things contributed to confirm and foster their prejudices, and what specious arguments they might frame in defence of them. It took some time, and much pains, so far to disengage the most eminent Christians, the apostles themselves not excepted, from these prejudices, as not to impose many branches of the ceremonial law upon the *Gentiles*. But what shall we say of *Prelatists* and *Independents*? Were their distinguishing

guishing tenets and church order *ever* of divine appointment; or are they not, from the least to the greatest, the *vain* opinions and *corrupt* inventions of men, which the scriptures condemn, and *utterly* unknown to the church for some ages? What can be said for *their* peculiarities, comparable to what the *Jewish* Christians might have advanced for their opinions and practices? Who then can suppose they stand *equally* recommended to our sympathy and indulgence?

Besides, tho' the obligation of the whole ceremonial system had for some time been dissolved, and intimation of this great event made to the church by various degrees, the grand demonstration of it was still wanting at the time of this controversy, and for several years after it.--I mean the destruction of the *temple*, and ruin of the whole *political* and *ecclesiastical* state of typical *Israel*. It was this great, and to the *Jews* unexpected revolution, which the Lord meant to carry irresistible conviction to the hearts of all, that the yoke of bondage was forever broken off from the neck of his church. Till that time, he was willing to bear with the weak prejudices of professing Christians. After it, the signification of his pleasure was complete; of consequence the observation of these rites which was *lawful*, tho' not binding by his authority, became *utterly sinful*, and no longer an object of Christian forbearance. Can any thing like this be offered for *Prelatists*, *Independents* and others, on a still more unscriptural foundation, with whom the Synod of *Relief* are ready to hold communion? Is not the canon of scripture perfected? Is any thing more than what is contained in these sacred oracles necessary, to shew, that *their* opinions and observances are "the doctrines and commandments of men?" Are *their* fancies the object of divine long suffering and patience, as some *Mosaic* ordinances were? And if not, where is their title to the like toleration in the church? It is true, there are times of general reformation coming, when, I doubt not, many of the abettors of these several systems, will cast away their idols, with as much detestation, as ever they hugged them with pleasure; but if we must bear with them in

church-communion till that happy period, the same reason will oblige us to communion with all others, who cannot see as we do, however *heretical* and *monstrous* their respective *creeds* be. And indeed the *Relief* principle about communion, is driving with a strong current into this unfathomable gulf.

Let their claim to communion in a *Presbyterian* church be as groundless as it will, our author can perceive no inconsistency in sustaining it ; for he asks with much confidence, " Tho' Christians in social worship cannot hold communion in the *smaller points* in which they differ, does this hinder them to hold communion in the many *great points* in which they are agreed ?" This he tells us is " a communion of *forbearance*, where they cannot in some cases maintain the communion of *unanimity and sameness of judgment*." P. 72. For the distinction it may pass. We are so overwhelmed with novelties in this piece, that we must cease to wonder : But a communion of *forbearance*, if he will have it so, this is with a witness ; and such a communion too, as will extend our religious connexions, as far as heart could wish, and give way to the torrent we were speaking of. Why, there are some *smaller points*, in which we cannot hold a communion of *unanimity* with *Socinians* and *Quakers*, with *Arminians* and *Lutherans*, with the churches of *Rome* and *Russia*. There are some *smaller points* in which we cannot agree with *Jews* and *Mahometans* ; yet what should hinder us to hold communion in the many *great points* in which we are agreed ? For there may be a communion of *forbearance*, where there cannot be the communion of *unanimity and sameness of judgment*. The points in difference with people of these denominations respectively, are *GREAT in themselves* ; but we have only to call them *small*, like other things of the same kind, and then we are fellow-citizens. The question certainly reaches so far, that it is not worth proposing. Had his fundamental principle been observed, we should never have heard of *Dissenters* in *England*, nor of the *Protestant* reformation itself ; nay, a *dissenting interest* formed in any part of the Christian world, at least, must be unscriptural and absurd.

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I should be unjust in leaving this part of the subject without doing justice to the *candor* of my friend. The clause in the *Confession of Faith*, which used to be cast in our teeth upon all occasions, he fairly gives up. P. 48. We hope therefore, whatever service it has hitherto done them in deceiving the multitude, it will never more be *bandied* about by the *Relief* synod, or their adherents. As to what he talks about the *Assembly* being composed of *Presbyterians* and *Independents* for ascertaining their judgment about communion; this can be no argument in favour of *Episcopalians*, of whom there were none at this time in the *Assembly*. Nay, it is highly probable from *Mr. Baillie's* letters, who was a member of this famous *Assembly*, that the *Independents* had also deserted their seats, when this article of the *Confession* was framed. The *Confession* was among the last services done by the *Assembly*; and long before they proceeded to this article, *Mr. Baillie* informs us, the *Independents* were wont to absent *whole weeks*, even *two or three weeks* at a time. But admitting *all* the original members had continued to the *last*, what he advances is nothing to the purpose; For what was to hinder them in a *general* declaration of the truth, when it was not *applied to themselves*,—when it still remained to be debated among them, *what profession* should be the bond and center of their communion with each other? Our author and I are agreed about the general truth asserted in the article of the *Confession* on communion, and yet we have so different views of *that profession*, which saints are bound to make and maintain, that we cannot join in church fellowship. Tho' the parties under consideration esteemed each other *saints*, their meeting in the *Assembly* no way supposed every bar to *church-communion* was removed; because they were not there sitting in the *Judicatory* of an *organized* church, as the *representatives* of several *Presbyteries*, like our *Synods* or *Assemblies*; but were called for the *advice* of *Parliament*, in a very unsettled and troublous time both of church and state.—And it was no doubt one great inducement to both *Presbyterians* and *Independents* to accept of, and retain for a time, at least, their seat in the *Assembly*, that

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an open, candid communication of each other's sentiments might be the happy mean of extinguishing differences, which had long subsisted, and been carried very high by both parties. The mean appeared *feasible*, tho' it proved *ineffectual*. One thing is undeniable, when the *Assembly* was dissolved, the *Presbyterians*, who made the greatest part of it, as well as their brethren who had not been called, were so far from holding communion with the *Independents*, notwithstanding this article of the *Confession*, that they would by no means yield to a *toleration* of them in separate congregations. Herein, indeed, I am clearly of opinion they were wrong, according to the idea of toleration explained above. But it serves to shew, that every way, the argument from their sitting together in this famous *Assembly*, is utterly inconclusive.

Loose, indigested and unscriptural as the *Relief* plan of communion is, our author would gladly impress the public with an idea of the *Seceders* having once adopted it, tho' on somewhat a smaller scale. "It is observable, and merits the particular attention of the candid reader, that the *Seceders* themselves have set an example of that very communion, as far as it relates to the church of *Scotland*, which the *Relief* body now plead for." How does that appear? "It is well known, that for a considerable time after the commencement of the *Secession*, the *Seceding* ministers declared their willingness to hold communion with those ministers and Christians of the established church, who were contending against her defections." P. 27.

The fact here alledged I cheerfully acknowledge, and as it is sometimes managed to the reproach of *Seceders*, who afterwards altered their conduct, we shall take the liberty to suggest a few things for their vindication, and thereby shew how little it makes to the purpose of the *Relief*.

The *Associate Brethren* were led forward to a total separation from this church, in respect of visible communion; gradually, even as the first *Protestants* were from the church of *Rome*. In their first contentings they had no views of matters being carried such lengths as they afterwards arrived at, more than *Luther* and his friends had of withdrawing from the church of

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Rome, and managing their testimony in a *separate* communion,—when that *venerable* reformer began to preach against *papal indulgences*, and otherwise to contend with the court of *Rome*. Their SECESSION was not like the *Relief separation*, a rash and precipitate step under the influence of humour, the love of money, and spirit of faction. It was the result of *mature*, reflexion, many *prayers*, and the concurrence of various dispensations of providence, from a principle of noble disinterested zeal for the honour of Christ, the vindication of his truth, and the liberties of his church. It took, of consequence, some time to assume a due form, and acquire stability.

It was during this period, that the *Seceding* ministers had freedom to hold occasional communion with the less degenerate part of the church of *Scotland*. When the Lord shined more clearly upon their path, pointing out *Secession*, as an indispensable duty to him and the church, and enabling them to state it upon more enlarged grounds than they first thought of,—they willingly followed him bearing his reproach, and found themselves shut out from that communion, which otherwise would have been warmly cultivated. Nor is it any wonder their *Secession* was a few years in assuming its more *perfect* form.—Their situation was peculiar. There had been nothing like it in any period of the church of *Scotland*.—Their aversion to separation was proportioned to their love of peace, and tender regard to the unity of the church.—They had a strong attachment to many *worthy* Fathers and Brethren, strengthened by all the reciprocal endearments of religion and friendship. It is not surprizing, that these and the like considerations disposed them to maintain occasional communion with some in this church, as long as they found they could do so, in a consistence with truth and a good conscience toward God.—The *Relief* ministers are, *in statu quo*, the same situation in relation to the *national church*, as when many years ago they deserted her, not once *seeking*, nor so far as we can judge, once *wishing* to know the Lord's mind more perfectly.

It likewise merits our attention, that tho' much unfaithfulness appeared in the *Judicatories* of the church,
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and very arbitrary measures had been pursued before the year 1732, which, with the following year, brought a great accession of guilt in these respects, and pushed the *associate Brethren* on the first steps toward a *Secession*; yet in the year 1734, and for some time after it, matters seemed to take another turn. This church seemed awakened at least to the *consequences* of her despotism and apostacy, and discovered some resolution of returning to the Lord, by her act for *purity of doctrine*, by repealing the act of 1732 about *settling vacant congregations*, by giving some check to *violent intrusions*, by declaring it the *privilege* of members of court to have their *dissents* or *protestations* recorded, and, tho' this indeed was expressed in very *ambiguous* language, that it should not be held unlawful to give a *doctrinal testimony* against the iniquitous proceedings of the *Judicatories*, with some other things of less consideration. It was indeed with the greatest exertion the honest party carried these things; but it gave the church an appearance of *reformation*. The *Seceding* ministers heartily rejoiced at this. They could not see their way clear to return to the bosom of their mother, who had treated them as *aliens*, notwithstanding these laudable steps; but they hoped the morning would brighten, and every ground of separation and complaint be fully removed. Waiting with much anxiety, and praying importunately for that happy period, in the mean time, they testified their sincere desire for peace, and their respect to the zeal and fidelity of their brethren, by holding occasional communion with them. Their fond hopes, however, soon vanished. In a very short time, the torrent of apostasy broke forth with *redoubled impetuosity*; as if it had acquired strength by the opposition made to it, in some former years. It continued to increase, and bear down every thing before it to this day; while the few more worthy names gave over the contest, or changed their ground, or even began to *plead the cause* of *secession*. It was natural to think, if their principles were right and their aims pure, that the *Seceding* ministers would take their position according to the new state of affairs. They did so. They broke

broke off *all connexion* with the *national church*.—When on the way of *reformation* they found it their duty to keep some terms with her, by communion with those, who *conscientiously* studied to preserve themselves pure ; but when she stopt short, and even revolted more and more, and yet those good men, for whom the *Seceders* had so endeared an esteem, hearkning to the suggestions of weak prejudice, sinful timidity, or some more forcible remonstrances of flesh and blood, *would* remain in her,—there was no choice left. If they would not let the *banner fall*, it was necessary to display it more *fully*.—The *Relief* party make nothing of all the growth of incorrigible defection to this time.

From what was just now said, it is easy to gather, they were men of *another spirit*, with whom the *seceding* Ministers held occasional communion, than are *now*, alas ! to be found. Determined adversaries of *error*, instead of maintaining communion with the erroneous, they brought them under process, or concurred in the prosecution. What Minister of the *establishment*, in our times, has so much zeal and resolution ? Friends to the *divine law* of *popular election*, they opposed *intrusions* out of *principle* ; and thus their opposition was *universal* and *steady*. *Intruders* they would not own at their ordination, or in assistance at sacramental solemnities. *Now*, alas ! the best friends of the people treat their *rights* as *chimerical*, and will not be *thought* to plead for them. Some violent settlements they oppose ; as to others they are silent, or take them under their patronage. How they behave at *ordinations* and *sacramental solemnities* with *Intruders* we saw before. Do they *sometimes* desert such ordinations ? *seldom* ; and when they do, their submission to censure for this pretended offence is both *very tame* and *very ready*, as in some late instances. Several of the sons of other times *wholly* absented from *Judicatories*, from conviction, that they *could not* fit in them without sin ; and those who attended made as faithful a stand, as a state of communion would admit, against the prevailing tyranny and corruption of the *courts themselves*, and from the *pulpit* in every corner, as the Lord gave them opportunity. Where now is that

courage and faithfulness? Who now deserts *Presbyteries, Synods and Assemblies*, because they are *leavened*? Who now does not content himself with a *spiritless* speech in our *convocations*, against even the *most tyrannical and oppressive* measures? It is a marvel to hear of a *dissent or protestation* in such cases. It is still more marvellous, to hear any thing of them from the *pulpit*. Is there such a *miracle* now in *Scotland*? No; *almost all* are become more fond of the praise of men for their *moderation and forbearance*, than for the praise of *GOD* in a steady, well-tempered zeal, for his glory and cause. It would be long ere we could finish the contrast. But this shews, that *Seceders*, in the circumstances above represented especially, might be *justified* in holding occasional communion with some in the *national church* in time *past*, when they would be *condemned* in such sacred intimacies with those, who are supposed to be their followers *now*.—The *Relief* make no such distinction.

Besides; at the commencement of the *Secession*, the *spirit, principles and views* of the *Associate Presbytery*, could not be known in an instant. Their *Act, declaration and testimony*, and their *Act concerning the doctrine of grace*, were not yet published. The *Declination* was not yet given in. After a *representation* of the procedure of the *Synod of Perth and Stirling* about *Mr. Ebenezer Erskine*, and of the *Assembly, 1733*, with its *Commission*, the only *joint papers* emitted by them for some time, were the *First testimony*, declaring the grounds of *Secession* from the *established church*, and *Reasons of non-accession* on the footing of what was done by the *Assembly, 1734*. But it was proper to give their well-affected brethren all necessary information about their principles and views, with a *reasonable* time for considering *maturely* so important a step as *separation* from the *national church*, and forming a connexion with them, before they entirely disengaged themselves from their communion; especially as not a few of them honestly set themselves against the prevailing management, and seemed hearty friends to their cause, and strenuous advocates for it. It was every way fit to bear with them for a season; since the openings of providence particularly, about which
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the best of men, with different measures of *light*, may have different apprehensions, must in all cases point out the propriety of *separation*.

The case is *now* greatly altered. The world has long been furnished with all desirable information about the *Secession* and its adherents; so that no man, who will give himself a little trouble to enquire, can be ignorant. The *grounds* of *Secession* acquire force daily. The calls of *Providence*, uniting with the directions of the *word*, wax louder and louder. Yet those of the *establishment*, ministers and people, however valuable in other things, give a deaf ear to all these admonitions. Whether from silly prejudice, or wilful ignorance of the true nature and state of our testimony, or fear of man, or respect to their character and worldly convenience, or some other principle of the same kind, they despise and abuse their advantages. Not able to hear of the *Secession* or a *Seceder* with patience, some of the best men on the *establishment*, strange to tell! are the bitterest enemies to our cause, which we are fully convinced is the cause of God and truth; and lay themselves out in all ways, consistent with any repute for *moderation*, to weaken, and even to extirpate it. Poor encouragement, indeed, to renew all the solemn intimacies of church-communion!—Nay, the case was very soon altered with the *first Seceders*. Instead of being drawn off from a backsliding church, after the year 1734, they who seemed in suspense and open to light, *slifted* their convictions, and were confirmed in their *obstinate* adherence to the *establishment*. They not only couched under the increasing burdens of the times, and yielded the cause, for which they had appeared with so much warmth; but turned their artillery from *pulpit* and *press*, upon their *once* much esteemed and greatly beloved *Seceding* brethren and their interests; nor were they, in the transports of their resentment, good men, *over scrupulous* about the *means* of blackening their character and injuring their cause. Was it not high time for *Seceders*, then, to take farewell of them? Whatever might be their inclination, the *Testimony of Jesus* required it; and this they preferred to their chiet personal joy.

These things considered, it will appear the *Seceders* did not change their conduct in relation to many worthy men in the *national church* without cause ; and also, that the *Synod of Relief* deceive themselves and their followers, by pretending to find any thing in the example of *Seceders* that can be the smallest apology for the communion, which they so eagerly court with those on the *establishment*.

But tho' less could be said for this and some other parts of their conduct, how comes our author to entertain a suspicion that "the *Seceders* will find fault with him for maintaining, that the terms of admission to the Lord's table are *only* to be found in the divine word ?" P. 29. Whether is there more *charity* or *justice* in such an insinuation ? Do they adopt any other rule of faith and practice than the divine word ? He knows the contrary. Tho' it were his opinion then, that some of their terms of communion were neither founded in the divine word, nor agreeable to it, he might have the *charity* to suppose they think otherwise, and therefore would never find fault with him for maintaining this position with all his might *.

Whether he believe it or not, they and he are most certainly *agreed*, that "the under shepherds have no *right* by their *own authority* to admit, or exclude

* He takes occasion here to bring in a long story about a controversy he had upon this subject, with the *Rev. Mr. Campbell of Stirling*. So noble, it seems, was the stand made against this gentleman, that he wants words to exhibit his own importance, and to celebrate his indisputable victory. I have no personal acquaintance with *Mr. Campbell* ; but his character for good sense, learning and talents of reasoning, is such, as to persuade me, *Mr. H's* confident boasting is not good ;--as *groundless* as it is *unseemly* ; and, that should he be so unhappy as to bring that Brother into the field in any cause, he would find himself in like circumstances as the *Lilliputians* in their war with *Gulliver*. Be that as it may, I am credibly informed, that his account of that affair is, in many things, a *gross misrepresentation* ; and that the honour of being made *Mr. Campbell's* text, of which he appears so proud, is no crown of glory ; since it only lay in a short discourse at the close of public worship, exposing the palpable deceit, vanity and ignorance of a studied harangue against *Seceders*, by way of *preparatory exercise* to the communion at *St. Ninian's*, on the Saturday immediately preceding.

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from sealing ordinances ; but *only* to *declare* and faithfully to *observe* the terms of Christian fellowship, which Christ hath appointed." P. 31. But then faithfully to declare, apply and observe these appointed terms, necessarily implies, that it must be their care to frame the testimony of the church agreeable to the divine word, and exhibit it to the world, *according to the circumstances*, in which all-wise providence sees meet to place her ;--turning the edge of it in *defence* of these particular truths or ordinances, that are especially impugned ; and against the opposite errors or institutions, which prevail in any age. The greater attention which is paid to this, the more does the church look like herself, and the better does she answer the design of her erection, as "*the pillar and ground of the truth.*"

Now, the circumstances of the church are often greatly altered in a short time ; of consequence her terms of admission or, conditions of membership, relative to the *truth* and a *due profession* of it, must be differently stated. What there was no need to fix as an explicit term of communion in a former period, may become a great part of the word of Christ's patience in the present age, and therefore a main hinge of admission to the seals of the covenant. Thus the great term of communion at the erection of the new Testament church seems to have been, that Jesus Christ was come in the flesh, that he was the Son of God, and actually raised from the dead, Acts viii. 37. 1 John v. 5. 2 John 7. Rom. x. 9, 10. Whoever declared his assent to these general important truths, was immediately received into the visible church. They were the leading points of the church's testimony at that time ; and as Satan had not yet employed his craft in perverting or corrupting them, every man was sustained sound in the faith, who professed to receive these articles ; but when men of corrupt minds set every engine at work to destroy the truth of the gospel, a further explication of it, and an application of its several branches, suited to the state of the church, were found absolutely necessary ; and thence an assent to these general truths could be no longer a satisfying test of admission.

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When the *Arian* heresy, for instance, was broached, would it have been warrantable or safe to have admitted all to church communion, who declared their belief of the propositions above mentioned? No; for while the sticklers for this heresy allowed that *Jesus of Nazareth* was the true *Messiah*, and the son of God, they affirmed at the same time, that he was not of the *same* nature with the Father, and therefore was not possessed of, at least, *all* divine perfections. In order to detect such persons, and prevent the church from being leavened with them, she found it necessary to state this article as a term of her communion, that tho' the SON be distinct from the FATHER in respect of *personality*, he is not merely *like* the Father, but of the *same* nature and *Essence* with him. So while the *Pelagian*, *Secinian* and *Arminian* systems were not yet forged, the church had no call to make the truths which stand opposed to the pernicious figments of these several collections, terms of her communion: But when the spirit of error impudently attacked the faith of the gospel in these different ways, it was certainly high time to display her banner as openly and particularly against it as she could; especially by shutting the door upon those who would stand by their delusions. It is upon this very principle that *Confessions* of faith as *tests* of orthodoxy have been justly esteemed so useful, and even necessary by the church of Christ. And these confessions, when managed with success, have assumed, and ever must assume, a form suited to the devices of Satan for explaining away, or corrupting the truths of Christ. Thus terms of communion not only *may*, but in the nature of things, *must* be multiplied and differently stated according to occasions. But will any man affirm, that this is to add to the written word, and enact terms of our own? He cannot with the least shew of reason; because in all this the church is only *declaring* and faithfully observing the terms which Christ has appointed. She does not invent her terms, but receive them from HIM. It is not to frame *new* ones, but to apply and vindicate the *old*. The one pure, undivided doctrine of Christ she is bound, agreeably to her changing condition,

tion, to hold up to the world and display against error under every new shape, the subtilty of hell finds convenient to give it. And when she makes the belief and profession of these several controverted articles, terms of her communion, it is no more than to make an honest scriptural confession of Christ, as revealed in the word, an indispensable condition of church membership.

Bearing this observation, which appears undeniably true, in his mind, my reader will see, that nothing can be more idle and senseless, than to talk as our author does of the *Relief Synod* "having no freedom to make these things terms of communion, or walls of separation between them and other Christians, which had no existence for nigh 1500 years after the terms of the christian fellowship were unalterably fixed by Christ and his apostles." P. 30. and to ask concerning the national covenant and solemn league,—“Was not this a term of communion of the church’s own making? Was it known by the apostles of Christ? Had it any existence for nigh 1500 years after these venerable inspired men were in their graves?” I say this is as idle and senseless, as the whims of the *Catholic Christian*, or any other unthinking *Libertine*, who takes it into his head to rail against all *Tests* of orthodoxy. The objection is of the same kind; I might therefore, once for all, refer our author to *Dunlop’s* excellent defence of Confessions of faith, for an answer. However, lest he should imagine I wish to shift him,—

It is true, that the terms of Christian fellowship were unalterably fixed by Christ, whereas the *national covenant* and the *solemn league* had no existence for many ages after. But what then? Why, we have no freedom to make them a term of communion as our fathers did, whose practice *Seceders* approve, in former times. Very well. The terms of communion were unalterably fixed by Christ, whereas the *Westminster Confession of faith* had no existence, till 1600 years after our Lord entered into his glory. You have no freedom, therefore, to make an approbation of it a term of communion? O yes; none are admitted to the *ministry*, or any other *church office*, among

us, without declaring their adherence to that valuable *confession*; and besides this, we would be understood to receive none even of a *private* character into our communion, who do not approve of the same excellent summary. 'This is mighty strange! for is not this a term of communion of the church's own making? Was it known by the apostles of Christ? Had it any existence for near 1600 years after these venerable men were in their graves? Tell me how you can reconcile these two, and then it will be easy for me to shew, that tho' our *Covenants* had no existence, till many ages after the death of the apostles, yet they were not terms of the church's own making.—Men may raise a *ghost* which they cannot *conjure*.

We have already seen, that these *covenants* were composed and sworn, at a time when the *British* churches were in a very peculiar and trying condition. A great many concurring circumstances of providence, without which they would never have been heard of, suggested both their propriety and use; while in taking and enjoining them, the church did no more than solemnly state her testimony, for the defence of the truth and its friends, against the abettors of error and corruption, according to her circumstances. The *national covenant* was originally framed against *Popery*; and afterwards its edge was laid against various corruptions, which, upon *popish* principles, had been introduced into the church of *Scotland*. The *Solemn League* was more immediately turned against *Episcopacy*, as it had been established and practised in the kingdoms of *England* and *Ireland*, with the various arts employed by its adherents to hinder the work of reformation. Thus both covenants were adapted to the times,—the parties concerned,—and the various corruptions abounding; and in both, *Zion* stood forth boldly to confess her God. Pray, what was there amiss in that appearance? Aye,—but *term of communion*.—*Term of communion*! In the name of common sense, could our Fathers do less, even on the principle of self-preservation, than exclude them from the communion of the church, and more especially deprive them of the *Pulpits*, and all power in the *universities*, *colleges* and *schools*, who, by their refusing the co-

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venant, publicly declared themselves of *popish* and *prelatical* principles, and the avowed, resolved patrons of that mass of corruption, which our Fathers, under divine conduct, meant to have purged ;—men, who, of consequence, were the *insidious, implacable and restless* enemies of that great work of God in which they were engaged ? Men of this character alone, felt the covenant bear hard on them, or had the least objection to it ; and to seclude such from the communion of the church, beside other things which might be mentioned, was no more than to take care those should not be nourished in her bosom, who were watching for opportunities of *stabbing* her to the heart. Without it, our ancestors could neither have been faithful to God, posterity, nor themselves. Their work was only *half* done, nay, every step they proposed was vain. If their cause then was *good*, which we suppose our author will not deny, this method to secure it was something more than *expedient*, it was absolutely *necessary*, and could not be *evil*.

Those who arraign the excellent persons of these times on this head therefore, to make their indictment good, must prove one of these *three* things,—either *first*, that the *doctrines* avowed in these covenants are not the truths of God, nor the duties engaged to in them of *moral obligation*,—even all these duties in their circumstances ; and thus that the doctrines, rites and institutions abjured in them, have the sanction of divine authority —Or they must prove, that it is *unlawful* for the church at any time, in order to greater mutual confidence, and a firmer opposition to prevailing apostasy, to *confess* Christ, and solemnly bind herself to a zealous maintenance of his truths and ways by *oath*.—Or finally, they must prove, that such solemn covenants were an *improper mode* of confessing Christ, and an unsuitable mean of exciting her to vigilance and fidelity at *this time*. And for all the bluster some people make, they will not find this an easy task. It appears to me impossible to prove any of these points. If the *Relief Synod*, or any member of that *respectable* body, shall try it, we will hear them. Shew us any thing in the *matter* of those covenants, the circumstances of our Fathers considered, which was

morally evil. Set aside the arguments that have been advanced in favour of avowing the truths and ways of Christ, on special occasions, by *solemn oath*, and establish the opposite opinion; or demonstrate, that there was no call to it, when the covenants were sworn; and our author's opinion shall from that moment be mine, that these *covenants* were indeed a term of communion of the church's own making.

The same general principle, on which we have argued, carries the fullest vindication of the act of the *Associate Presbytery*, relative to *Ministerial and Christian communion*, about which our author makes so much noise; even tho' it had been conceived in stronger terms than it is. The *Associate Brethren* were led out of the *national church*, with a testimony in their hands for the invaluable interests of the reformation, at a time, when *Britain and Ireland* were over-run with the most pestilent errors and corruptions of different kinds. Set against a torrent of apostasy which was swelled to an unusual pitch, and receiving daily accessions, in the midst of countless dangers both from within and without, they entered into a solemn bond, suited to the circumstances in which holy and wise providence had placed them. This step, agreeable to the word of God, and the practice of the best reformed churches in perilous times, appeared to them highly necessary to make their testimony as explicit as possible, to give it all the force it was capable of, to strengthen mutual confidence and cement their union. Satisfied at the same time, that such a determined stand for the work of God among their hands, was no less incumbent on *private Christians* in *their* place, than upon the *ministry* in *theirs*, they agreed, that joining in this bond should be "the term of *Christian* as well as *ministerial* communion in the admission of people to sealing ordinances; secluding therefrom all *opposers*, *contemners* and *slighters* of the said renovation of our covenants." Was this a term of communion of their own making? Or was it any thing different from *declaring*, *applying*, and *faithfully observing* the terms CHRIST hath appointed,—even an honest confession of his name, agreeable to the circumstances of the church, and the work of God in her.

her. We still suppose, as in the case of the *national covenant* argued above, that there is nothing renounced in this *bond*, but what is condemned in the word as error, nor any thing engaged to, but what is undeniable duty, enjoined in the same word ;—and that *avouching* God as our God, on the footing of the new covenant, with a solemn avowal of his truths and ways by *oath*, on proper occasions, is of *moral obligation*. The *first* of these the *Relief Synod*, we hope, will not dispute. The *second* I should willingly undertake to prove both from scripture and reason, were it not unanswerably proved already in different publications, to which all have access †.

However the *Associate Presbytery* wisely “judged, that much tenderness and lenity is to be used with the weakest of Christ’s flock, who are lying open to light, and minting to come forward in the said cause,” and therefore that they were to be waited for till they willingly offered themselves ‡. They were sensible that public vows are a duty not of a stated nature, and continued practice, in *all* periods of the church, such as prayer, reading, hearing and communicating ; but an *occasional* exercise, of the same general nature as *fasting*, according to the openings of providence, and the calls given to the church by them ;—that weak, or ill-informed Christians are in danger of being entangled by the cunning craftiness of those, who, being enemies to the truth, or of a lukewarm temporising spirit, set themselves in all ways to oppose so important and necessary a service ;—that others, not duly apprehending the nature of this duty and the evangelical manner of performing it, under impressions of the deceit and desperate wickedness of their own hearts, or disquieting fears about their gracious state, might be filled with scruples relative to their joining in so solemn a bond ;—I say, fully sensible of all this, they were willing to be “gentle among their people even as a nurse cherisheth her children.” And to this day,

† See the very valuable performances of the *Rev. Messrs. Moncrieff, Morison and Graham* upon this subject.

‡ See their *Acts*, OCT. 21. 1742. FEB. 14. 1744.

Seceders never forced their public vows upon any. Nay, persons are not admitted to join in the *bond*, till they give satisfying evidence of their understanding it in all its connexions, and declare themselves perfectly clear about the divine obligation of such a mode of confessing Christ, with its seasonableness at this time, after much pains taken with them in public and private. Numbers who offered themselves have been kept back for a time, from an apprehension that they could not swear in *truth, judgment and righteousness*; but I never knew of a single person being denied church-communion in the *Secession* on account of their scruples, while they were not setting themselves against the *received principles* of the society on this head. Thousands just now are admitted to all church privileges, who never joined in the *bond*. There are many such in every congregation. With what face then can it be said, that the door of communion is unreasonably straitned?

Shall this very lenity, for want of which *Seceders* are perpetually reproached, particularly by the *Relief*, be made their crime? Unaccountable indeed, our author thinks so! They find covenanting "a moral duty, and yet suffer their hearers to *lie open to light* about the obligation of a moral duty; they are therefore much greater *latitudinarians* than the *Relief* ministers themselves, who will suffer *none* of their hearers to *lie open to light*, whether the moral law is *obligatory or not*, without *excluding* them from communion." P. 76. Whether *Seceders* then vigorously insist upon swearing their *bond* as a term of communion, or cheerfully bear with the weak and uninformed, it is all one. They shall be impanelled either for imposing on conscience, or making void the divine law. How like is this to the conduct of the *Jews*, relative to our Lord and his messenger the *Baptist*? Similar to children sitting in the market place, nothing would please them, because the divine procedure did not suit their *humour*.

It is well, that the "*Relief* ministers have such a regard to the moral law:" but how base and unmanly is it to insinuate, that *Seceders* suffer their hearers to *lie open to light*, whether the law be obligatory or not?

not? If men will argue, why are they not candid? What *Seceder*, Sir, takes this liberty? Is it not *one* thing to allow a man to hesitate about the obligation of the *moral law*, as an unalterable rule of righteousness, and quite *another* thing to bear with a person who cannot satisfy his own mind, whether this or the other particular duty be indeed required in the *moral law*, and *his* duty, and at *this* time? The *Seceders* dare not on any account, venture the *former*; but think themselves every way justified in the *latter*. Is it not a *moral duty* to celebrate the memorial of our Lord's death in the *supper*? but may not a man be admitted to the *baptism* of his child, who, from jealousies of his state before God, from weak fears and violent temptations, has not communicated for some years, perhaps never in his life? Do you then give him a liberty to dispute the *obligation* of the *divine law*, because you suffer him to lie open to *light* about a *moral duty*? Is not *family fasting* a *moral duty*? but do you debar from the communion all who neglect it, cannot for some time understand it, make excuses about it, or from various circumstances of their family, cannot see the expediency of it? What, pray, is this, to say the least, but to suffer men to lie open to *light* about a *moral duty*? Is not attendance on societies for prayer and Christian conference, as the Lord gives opportunity, a *moral duty*? but are there not some members of the *Relief* congregation of *St Ninians*, who cannot see it to be so, or who, from their circumstances, in providence, or from the various abuses to which this institution is liable, cannot see it to be *their duty*, after all the care our author has taken to instruct and direct them? What is this but to suffer people to lie open to *light* about a *moral duty*? do you, in these cases therefore, give them a privilege of questioning, whether the *moral law* be *obligatory*, or *not*? Many such instances might be produced.

In like manner, *Seceders* hold conform to scripture and the judgment of the best divines, who have had occasion to touch upon that subject, that *public vowing* to the Lord, on fit occasions, is a duty of *moral obligation*, and yet can bear with numbers in the present omission of it, who appear conscientiously

ly scrupulous. Persons who openly contend against its obligation, and are at pains to cast stumbling blocks in the way of their brethren, they will not admit to communion. Such they reckon *opposers* and *contemners* of a *divine* ordinance, labouring to undermine the testimony of Jesus, as held and maintained by them, and therefore, no proper objects of *forbearance* in a state of *communion*. But those who "dull of hearing," are fettered by unallowed prejudice, cannot properly enter into the dispensations of our day which call so loudly for this exercise, have difficulties about *our manner* of conducting it, or from darkness about their own spiritual condition dare not proceed in it, and at the same time, regular and inoffensive in their behaviour, *Seceders* think entitled to their sympathy and indulgence. Men of the *former* description they have little or no immediate business with, as they don't apply for communion with them, or quickly turn off to their own ways: and he must be either very *ignorant* or *malevolent*, who will insist, that the admission of persons of the *latter* description implies the least allowance for people to *lie open to light* about the *obligation* of the *moral law*. At the same time our author must see, that such reasoning can be turned with the greatest force against the *Relief*. For the observation of the *Presbyterian* constitution and order, by their own confession, is a *moral duty*, and such too, that it must enter *essentially* into a *due public profession* of the church in *all* periods, stands intimately connected with the *whole frame* of her ordinances, and upon it the preservation of these ordinances, in any due measure of purity, greatly depends; yet they can allow *Prelatists* and *Independents* not only to *lie open to light* about them, but to deny them obstinately, oppose them vigorously, and despise them with all possible scorn, nay assiduously labour to subvert them, in all the intimacies of church-communion. Shall I therefore plead, "that they allow people to *lie open to light*, whether the moral law be *obligatory* or not?" No; I think the *practice* both *sinful* and *dangerous*, but the *inference* unjust.

Our author seems also much inclined to say *something* against one party of *Seceders* making the condemnation

demnation of the *Burgefs-oath* a term of communion. But what that *something* should be, it is probable he is not resolved. His discourse is so ambiguous and wavering, that it is hard to tell what to make of it. His judgment of that matter seems but half formed. We shall therefore give him leisure to digest it better, and put his opinion into more determinate language.

Mean time we may proceed to his APPENDIX. The design of this last part of the performance is *two-fold*;—to chastise me with unbounded *scurrility*, and to quibble about some facts advanced in the *Relief scheme considered*. The execution of the *first* answers so well for itself, in the abstract laid before the reader, that it would be an insult on his patience and good sense, to take any farther notice of it. If my *Relief* opponents can glory in their shame, I have other business on hand than to disturb them. But it may be reasonably expected, since I have been led to review this piece, that the *second* should not pass without observation.

Our author here joins in the prodigious outcry by the *Relief* against attacking the *characters* of their leaders. It is certainly much easier to perceive the design, than the ground of this uproar. Where narrative has been employed, it is simple and short; without the smallest degree of colouring, which it would easily have admitted, and which some would have thought necessary; while many circumstances, as those concerned must know, are industriously concealed. The *character* of no man has been touched, further than the *manner* in which some have connected themselves with the *Relief*, or the course of the *public administration* of the society, or the mistakes in their *printed* performances, and the *temper* which runs through them,—all exhibiting the *spirit* of the scheme, can be supposed to affect their reputation. And if in these points men are not willing to meet with *censure*, let them take care not to *deserve* it; but if they are not ashamed to do things worthy of blame, they must not take it amiss to be told of them.

Is it not a very singular touch to charge me with
 “tearing up the ashes of the dead with much cruelty
 and

and impiety," because it is observed the late *Mr. Boston* left his charge at *Oxnam* at his own hand, and formed a *Relief* congregation at *Jedburgh* without any regular call ; and because I presumed to make some strictures on *Mr. Neill's* discourses on *Christian communion* ? This must be a species of impiety and cruelty of a very extraordinary kind, and, for any thing I know, is esteemed such by the *Relief* only.

It is no less entertaining to observe, how he strains every nerve to muster up *half a score* of lies, and braves with as much assurance, as if I were already a convict, and had nothing between me and execution, but to take farewell of my friends.

It was said that *Mr. Ramsay* "was employed in the *Shotts*, as a probationer, with a view to reconcile an abused parish to their Intruder and his kirk *." This it seems is a gross falsehood ; for "*Mr. Ramsay* was employed only to preach the gospel to the people at their own desire, not to reconcile them to the *Intruder*." Ap. P: 4. What were *Mr. Ramsay's* intentions he best knows ; nor do I meddle with the designs of the people. Possibly the views of both were upright. But upon what principle, and to what end were some of the most popular members of *Hamilton Presbytery* sent to preach at *Shotts*, before the erection of the *Burgher* congregation in that place, and sometime after it ? Was it not intended to keep the people in the communion of the national church, reconcile them to *Mr. Wells*, and crush the *Secession* in the bud ? Was not *Mr. Ramsay* employed on the same plan ? Was it not upon this ground alone, that the *Intruder* consented to countenance, and invited his ministrations ; expecting, if not expressly stipulating, that the people should attend him as they did the assistant ? Did not the *Presbytery* abide in these views, and support *Mr. Ramsay* in serving them ? Was *Mr. Ramsay* a stranger to all this, or was he not the willing tool of the *Presbytery* and the *Intruder* ? Will it be denied, that when the people saw the snare, and avoided it, attending on *Mr. Ramsay's* day of officiating, and absenting on

* *Relief scheme. &c. B. 6.*

Mr. Wells, and thus the scheme proved abortive, that *Mr. Ramsay* was dismissed? How can this assertion then be a *gross falsehood*?

It had been alledged concerning *Mr. Ker* at *Bells Mill*, that "the Presbytery of *Edinburgh* admitted, licensed and ordained him *." To which he replies, "That the Presbytery of *Edinburgh* admitted and licensed him, is true; but that they ordained him is a notorious falsehood." In this I shall give our author credit for once. He had access to know; and as this correction is of *singular* importance, and a leading hinge of the controversy, as all may see, I humbly beg *Mr. Ker's*, *Mr. Hutchison's*, and the *Rev'd. Presbytery's* pardon. My allegation was a flagrant injury to each of these parties; if the mistake be not more pardonable, from the consideration, that, at this time, there were a sort of *two* Presbyteries of *Glasgow* in the *Relief*; and I am sure *one* of these had no hand in this settlement. Did *Messrs. Gillespie, Cruden* and *Cowan* concur in it?

I observed that "every assistant at a sacrament must have some *pecuniary* compensation according to the length and other circumstances of the journey. Does he come ten, twenty or thirty miles? Then he will expect, and actually receives *two, three* or *five* pounds. The sums mentioned are moderate, and it seems common. Double the greatest of them has been given †." This our author cannot get denied, and yet he would be thought to do so; for he declares P. 5. that he was never at a sacrament where "*such* sums" were going. But I ask him, whether he never heard of *such* sums going at different sacraments? Never at *Edinburgh*, never at *Campbelton*, &c.? Farther I ask him, whether he has been at sacraments where *some* "sums have been received?" He has "*several* times rode far without receiving a single farthing." But has he *always* done so? "It is the *ordinary* way of *Relief* ministers to assist one another without any thing." But is there not often *another* way? Dare he answer this question in the negative? If not, how has he the confidence to call my assertion as it stands above, "a

* *Relief scheme*, &c. P. 7.

† *Relief scheme*, &c. P. 9.
glaring

glaring lie?" "But even supposing, that *Relief* congregations should think it proper to make a compliment to ministers, who assist at their communion, are they not free to do with their own what they please?" By all means. Who doubts their right to dispose of what is, indeed, their own, as they see meet? Only establishing a practice of this kind, and pleading for it with so much acrimony, shews somewhat of the *spirit* of the scheme.

He talks in the same ambiguous and evasive manner about their rule of election. It was represented, "that in the election of the *first* minister, at least, in every particular congregation with them, *none* are permitted to vote, but those who contributed to the building of the place of worship, or have purchased seats in it †." Is this fact? No; It was not so in the congregation of *St Ninians*. P. 6. Will our author be offended, if I beg leave to question his assertion? Is he sure? Did he make all proper inquiry? I was at some pains to search out the fact; and of all the *Relief* settlements I have known or particularly heard about, there is not *one* exception to this rule. Was not this the rule in *Edinburgh*; in *Glasgow*, both when *Mr Cruden* and *Mr Bell* were called? Was it not so at *Anderstown*, at *Hamilton*, at *Irvine*, &c. &c. &c.? I must therefore have other evidence than *Mr. Hutchison* has adduced, to believe the settlement at *St. Ninians* was a singular one. Why, but our author "presided in the election of two candidates, in two congregations, where it was not so much as a question, whether contributors only were to vote; but *all* in *church-communion*, and of a *good* character were allowed a vote in the election." Perhaps no such question was debated in his presence. But was there no such question made at all? Will he aver this? Is he positive about it? and what were these same congregations? I am apt to think, if there were not some quibble here, he would have named them. "*All* in *church-communion* were allowed to vote." Aye; but were any beside *contributors* reckoned in *church-communion*? This question is the rather necessary, because our author will, in his zeal to screen

† *Relief scheme*, &c. P. 10.

things, turn to every side; and because it has been often warmly contended in *my* hearing, that it cannot be known at a *first* election, who are in *church-communion* with the *Relief*, but by their *contributions*; which is said to make their rule of election indispensable. He “knows the same to have been the case in many other elections.” *Where* were they Sir, and *how many*? If you will please to inform us, we may come at the truth. When all is done, is not what is here charged the *common* and *ordinary* method? Then the argument on this head, stands in its full force. It would do so, tho’ not one election in ten were managed upon this principle. If there be a *single* exception to the prevailing mode, I must be of opinion, it is no more than a popular stroke to serve a turn,—not to alarm a people, who cannot understand the scripture-ground of the reigning practice: Or, to make the very best of it; *Relief* elections are neither conducted upon the same principle, nor in the same way; which at least proclaims a glaring and important contradiction,—shewing also, that a *divine* institution, allowed by themselves to be so, in most instances, is *trifled* with and *counteracted*.

The other part of their plan of election is denied with a great deal of passionate language: P. 6. that “all, who are qualified after this manner, may claim an interest in the election, whether they be *Relief* people, properly so called, or not; whether they be credible saints,—men of blameless circumspect lives or not;—whatever their profession or even their practice be*.” But not so warm, Sir. Was it ever known in the *Relief*, that any man, who contributed money and insisted upon voting, was denied this privilege? I trow not. Has not his money *always* hitherto been supposed to give him a *right*? It has beyond contradiction. Have all been strictly of the *Relief* profession and principles, and men of blameless lives, who gave money to build a house? Who will venture to say it? Is not our author sure of the contrary? Speak plainly, Sir, and the fact will be established. Have not people of the *establishment*, persons of declared Inde-

* *Relief scheme*, &c. P. 10, 11.

pendent principles, and a sort of mongrel-Seceders contributed money, and been allowed to vote in *Relief* elections? Are not these people of very different professions? Are swearers, sabbath breakers, tiplers &c. men of good character? And have all such, upon all occasions, been debarred from voting, after having cast their mite into the treasury?

Speaking of the advantages attending the mode of election in the *Relief*, my words are, that “persons, who resolve never to enter into any further religious connexion with the *Relief* congregation, having obtained a popular preacher, make their property turn out to an excellent pecuniary account. Their money will yield double interest while it lies in that house; and a bill of sale will produce a good reversion*.” Our author does not believe this, and takes leave to place it also in the *system of lies*, P. 7. We shall therefore try to render it a little more credible. Did he never know any, who, tho’ they purchased seats in a *Relief* meeting-house, still retained their property, perhaps ordinarily used it by attendance on ordinances for many years, yet never applied for admission to the seals of the covenant, but *statedly* joined in another communion; often declaring, they never meant any closer connexion with the *Relief* congregation;—persons, who let some part of their property to others with pecuniary advantage, or, who, when selling their seats, found their own account in it? I can scarce suppose him ignorant of this. But if he be; I beg leave to tell him it consists with my certain knowledge. Let him inquire how this matter stood in *Glasgow*, during *Mr. Cruden’s* incumbency, or since the new *Relief* erection there. Then let him step out to *Anderstown*. Impartial and earnest in his inquiries, he will gather particulars in both these places. And there is no reason to imagine things singularly new obtain in those congregations.

I allowed that “some *Relief* people seek a purer dispensation of the gospel than generally can be enjoyed in the established church;” but added, that, “by far the greatest part are utterly incapable of rendering

any tolerable reason of their conduct. One is actuated by *humour* ; another by *vanity* ; a third by *novelty* ; a fourth studies nothing more than his own convenience, and that of his family †." Upon which, after calling me a *downright liar*, our author thinks proper to make some very curious, declamatory, soothing flourishes. Ap. P. 7, 8. To all which I shall only insist that trial be made. Some have found the matter as here represented. One becomes a *Relief-man*, because he is piqued at the person of his parish minister, or the conduct of some of his brethren in another communion : When that *humour* has subsided, perhaps he is gone. Another, because he would be distinguished and talked of ; and when he finds himself unnoticed, or his consequence declining, he is gone. A third, because the scheme is *new*, and the minister *new* ; when both become a little more familiar, he is gone. A fourth, because he is nearer a *Relief* church than any other ; and when his circumstances are altered, he also is gone. Pray do not *humour*, *vanity*, *novelty* or *convenience* influence such persons ? And are not instances undeniably common ?

It was insisted, that " the people in the establishment are cheerfully admitted to the Lord's table with them, (the *Relief*) as often as they please, upon an attestation of their moral character by the parish minister, sound in the faith or unsound, an intruder or not †." The *stigma* of a *detestable lie* is put on this observation. Ap. P. 8. " It is not the way of the *Relief* ministers to receive certificates from ministers unsound in the faith." It is not their way. What do you mean by that ambiguous expression ! Can you deny that it has been done, *often* done ? Certainly you will not have the assurance to refuse a thing so unquestionable ; if *Baxterians*, *Arminians*, *Pelagians*, or *Socinians* be unsound in the faith. No, you do not deny it, but only would have us to suppose you do. " It is not the way."—Was ever such a certificate in any instance rejected ? *When* Sir ? *Where* ? If it never was, because of the *unsoundness* of the attester,

† *Relief* scheme, &c. P. 17.

‡ *Relief* scheme, &c. P. 25.
this

this we may presume is very like a *way*.—"I do not believe, that one of them ever received certificates from Intruders in order to admit their hearers to communion." Must the charge be necessarily a *detestable lie*, because you do not believe it; when no proper reason of your incredulity is given? That is a very easy way of argumentation. It will make any thing a *lie*, which you please to pronounce such. "It would be a great wonder to see those under the ministry of *Intruders* apply to the *Relief* ministers for sealing ordinances." Was there never such a *preternatural* event, or is it not a *wonder* pretty common? Whether such applications have been received, ask at *Collingsburgh*, at *Auchtermuchty*, at *Cowpar of Fife*, at *Largo*, &c. &c. &c. What *Relief* clergyman is so squeamish as to scruple such applications, if there be no other circumstance of disgust, than that the incumbent is an *Intruder*?

Speaking of the solemn league I give it as my opinion, that "it was not the intention of our worthy ancestors to call in the aid of *fire and sword, racks and gibbets*,—these antichristian engines, to convert men to the truth *." Here too it seems I make, in my usual manner, a "pleasing excursion beyond the limits of truth," and with very much meekness am pronounced a *Reverend liar* accordingly. Ap. P. 9, 10. Pray, may not our author and I differ in our opinion about the intention of our ancestors, and yet neither be a *liar*? O but the *national covenant*, agreeable to the petition of the *General Assembly*, 1639. was enjoined by *Parliament* under all CIVIL PAINS, 1640. The reader will no doubt observe it is the *Solemn League* I am speaking of; whereas *Mr. H.* makes his reflections on the *National Covenant*. However it does not much alter the case. I shall give my reasons for being of opinion, it was not the intention of our worthy ancestors to call in the aid of the antichristian engines above-mentioned to convert men to the truth, notwithstanding what our author suggests; submitting them to the impartial and candid.

In this oath our fathers "detest and refuse the *usurped* authority of the *Roman antichrist* upon the

* *Relief scheme*, &c. P. 61.

scriptures of God, the civil magistrate, and the consciences of men :” § 1. And we ought certainly to presume as much upon the good sense and religion of our reforming ancestors, especially considering their character in history, as to conclude they did not mean to claim and exercise an authority over others, which they were convinced was *usurped*, and as such *detested* and refused ; unless we had the most *unquestionable facts* to demonstrate the contrary.

Besides, every *Jurant* “ protests, that after long “ and due examination of his conscience in matters “ of true and false religion, he was now *thoroughly* “ *resolved* in the truth by the *word* and *spirit* of God ; “ and therefore that he *believed* with the *heart*, confessed with the *mouth*, and subscribed with his *hand*” that oath.—He “ protests, and calls the SEARCHER “ *of all hearts to witness, that his mind and heart did* “ *fully agree with this his confession*, promise, oath and “ subscription, so that he was not *moved* with any “ *worldly respect*.” § 2. Now, what man of any conscience could declare this, if *fire* and *sword*, *racks* and *gibbets* were his constraining motives ? Or who has the heart to think, or the audacity to maintain, that our worthy ancestors would allow persons to swear such an oath, when they had every satisfying evidence, that *fear of punishment alone* prevailed with them to take it ;—and accordingly that they meant to employ the instruments of persecuting violence to convert men to the truth ? Before he can imagine this, he must believe those great and good men, were a race of the most abandoned *miscreants* that ever saw the sun.

Tho’ our author is very certain that *fire* and *sword*, *racks* and *gibbets* are included in ALL CIVIL PAINS, yet the judgment of those, who are acquainted with the *Scots law* is against him. It is their opinion, that unless the law expressly declares *death* to be the punishment, or mentions the *pains of treason*, any other, even the *highest* annexed to any *Parliamentary statute*, cannot be constructed in law to amount to *death* : and that when the punishment is *all civil pains*, the judge is at liberty to proportion the punishment to the nature of the crime, and quality of the offender †.

† See *Wilson’s Defence*, P, 299.

It is *one* thing to *defend* the church and state,—to *secure* a people in the enjoyment of their civil and religious liberties, against the machinations and encroachments of enemies by *all civil pains*; and *another* thing to attempt *converting* men to *the truth* by them. The *first* was the intention of our fathers, as is plain from the history of that time,—their many public *declarations, representations, protestations, &c.* It is evident from the whole *spirit*, nay, and several *paragraphs* in the *National covenant* itself.—It was to “*secure and defend the liberties of their country, the ministration of justice, and punishment of iniquity against all enemies within this realm, or without it, § 3*;—having in their eye, persons who were “*mind- ing first, under a cloke of religion, to corrupt and subvert secretly God’s true religion within this kirk; and afterward, when time might serve, to become open enemies and persecutors of the same, under vain hope of the Pope’s dispensation.*” § 2. This was their declared intention. And was it not just? Was it not laudable? The *other* is no where insinuated, nor does it appear they ever dreamt of it.

If they meant to make any examples of this mode of conversion, *Parliament men* were fit objects of the national resentment, as many things concurred to give *them* greater influence than others upon the whole state of their affairs. Yet in the same act referred to by our author, while it is provided, that the *Covenant* “*be presented at the entry of every Parliament, and before they proceed to any other act, that the same be publicly read and sworn by the whole members of Parliament, claiming voice therein;*” it only “*ordains, that the refusers to subscribe and swear the same shall have no place or vote in Parliament.*” Pray, is not *mere exclusion* from *places of power and trust*, because I will not give society a necessary pledge of my fidelity, something very different from endeavouring to *convert* me, or others, thro’ my *capital punishment*, by the instruments of bloody cruelty above-mentioned.

It is no more than reasonable, certainly, to judge of their *intentions* by their *actions*. If they really intended

tended to call in the aid of these antichristian engines; why were they not actually employed; especially when our fathers thought the cause of the last importance, and had it so much at heart? That numbers refused the *covenant*, we are sure; that the *whole* power of the nation was in the hands of the *Covenanters* at this time, is no less undeniable; it must have been easy therefore, to have carried such an intention into execution: Yet I put all the *Relief* interest to defiance to shew, that persons of *any rank, order or denomination* in *Scotland*, suffered by *fire or sword, racks or gibbets* for a simple refusing the covenant. Nay, it does not appear that the least violence was offered by government to any on a *religious* account. This I think of itself amounts to a demonstration, all circumstances considered, that our reformers had no such *bloody* designs as this writer charges them with. So much to shew that my opinion is at least *plausible*.

The tenth and last falsehood charged on me is that "tho' *Mr. Bell* before his late sacramental solemnity invited the assistance of his *quondam* brethren, they to a man denied him *." He is "persuaded *Mr. Bell* will endeavour to expose me as a *lying prophet* for this assertion," App. P. 11. But wherein is this contrary to truth? The reader must be amazed to observe what a *base, disingenuous quibble* is employed to find it so. Do I affirm that *Mr. Bell* invited *all* his *quondam* brethren? No. Nor is it probable on many accounts that he did. I never imagined it. That he invited *several* of them our author allows; and that all whom he did invite to a man denied him, even our writer has not the boldness to refuse. Where then is the falsehood of what is asserted? Whether *Mr. Stuart* was invited or not, I shall give myself no trouble to examine, nor is it any thing to the purpose.

HAVING now offered every thing which I thought necessary on the several parts of this excellent performance, I cheerfully leave the issue of the cause with those who can think without *prejudice*, and decide with *impartiality*. TRUTH will prevail on what-

* *Relief scheme, &c.* P. 79.

ever side it is found ; and he is a contemptible writer indeed, who strives only for the applause of victory. The human heart is a great depth ; but so far as I have been able to trace its operations in this controversy, it is the cause of *truth*, and not of *party*, which I wish to plead. The attacks made upon its interests by the *Relief* first put the pen into my hand, and have now impelled me to resume it. Let *truth* be secured, and my performances shall attend our author as *trophies* of his heroic deeds.

He intimates in the conclusion of his piece, that "if he has conducted his vindication of the *Relief* principles at the expence of those of *Seceders*, they have their own friends to blame, who by their *folly* and *indiscretion* provoked the combat ; and without being endued with the gift of prophecy, he foresees that the *Secession* cause will acquire neither credit nor profit by this controversy."

It is certainly true, that the scope of his performance, is, rather to raise a dust upon *Seceders*, than defend his own connexions. To attempt the *one* is easier than to accomplish the *other*. His plan of operation therefore, must be commended for the *prudence* with which it has been laid and executed. Whether he has vindicated the *Relief* principles, my silence will not hinder others to determine. The *Secession* cause has survived much more formidable attacks than the *combined* force of the *Relief* is, or ever will be capable of. Its credit, I doubt not, will flourish, and its profit be enhanced, when *Mr. Hutchison* and I sleep in the dust. That it will acquire either by my method of agenting it, I dare not boast, lest my speech prove me perverse. That it will not *suffer*, we may be permitted to hope. It is worthy of a much better advocate ; and such it must have found, if any of my fathers or brethren could have commanded as much leisure as to lay open the *pernicious* scheme of *Relief*, and appear for the opposite interest ; but till their attention be turned this way, the weakest, well-meant endeavour will not fail of their indulgence. Be my *folly* and *indiscretion* what they may, the blame is wholly mine own, since none of them ever saw the
for-

former or present production, till they appeared from the press.

It was hinted before, and there is too much ground to repeat the observation, that many are steeled against every impression in favour of the truth upon this subject. Most men are too high, to bring either their principles or practice to the bar of the word. Their main concern is to *twist* it into a coincidence with their own pre-conceived opinions; and in this case we must not expect, they will bear with patience any thing that has an unfriendly aspect toward them. Why should not such take their own way? The JUDGE standeth at the door.—It is encouraging on the other hand, that there is no snare laid with so much subtilty, but our exalted Lord can break it; nor any mean so contemptible, but he can make it effectual for setting his own at liberty. If what has now and formerly been advanced, shall be blessed to any for that end, it will be a furtherance of my joy. In the mean time, the Public will excuse me for not following *Mr Hutchison's* example, in cautioning them against his writings, as he does against mine. By all means let them have a candid, deliberate perusal. *Truth* loves to appear; but to hear *one* side of any cause and shut our ears against the *other*, is manifest injustice both to *truth* and *ourselves*.

T H E E N D.

E R R A T A.

Page 10. Line 41. for *new* read *nice*. P. 14. l. 22. for *partakers* r. *partaker*. P. 44. l. 34. for *connected* r. *unconnected*. P. 47. l. 4. for *was* r. *does*. P. 68. l. 30. for *vigorously* r. *rigorously*. l. 43. for *the* r. *that*.

Speedily will be published, the SECOND EDITION of *The RELIEF Scheme considered*; wherein the *origin* of the *RELIEF Church* is traced, her *constitution* and *order* delineated, and the plan of *communion* adopted in her examined,

By JAMES RAMSAY, *Minister of the Gospel in GLASGOW.*

